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KNOWLEDGE

WORLD

KNOWLEDGE

OF THE

WORLD, &c. &c.

KNOWLEDGE



WORLD, &c. &c.

T H E
K N O W L E D G E
O F T H E
W O R L D,
A N D T H E
A T T A I N M E N T S
U S E F U L I N T H E
C O N D U C T O F L I F E.

Translated from the French of Monsieur
CALLIERES, Secretary of the Cabinet
to LEWIS XIV. one of the Forty
Members of the Academy, and Mi-
nister Plenipotentiary at the Peace of
Ryswick.

L O N D O N :

Printed for the TRANSLATOR; and sold by
R. BALDWIN, in Pater-noster-Row; W.
FLEXNEY, in Holborn; T. VERNOR, at
Garrick's Head, St. Michael's Alley, Cornhill;
and J. PHIPPS, at the Bible and Three
Crowns, Norton Falgate.

KNOWLEDGE

OF THE

WORLD,

AND THE

ATTAINMENTS



CON- LIFE

Translated from the French of Monsieur
Galleries, Secretary of the Cabinet
to Lewis XIV. one of the forty
Members of the Academy, and Mi-
nister Plenipotentiary at the Peace of
Rastatt.

LONDON:

Printed for the Translator; and sold by
R. Baldwin, in Pall-mall; W.
Barrow, in Holborn; T. Vernon, at
St. Dunstons; and J. Smith, at
St. Pauls Church-yard.

Approbation of the Book from
Authority, translated from the
French.

I HAVE read, by the Order of
the Lord Chancellor, the Book,
entitled, THE KNOWLEDGE OF
THE WORLD, AND THE ATTAIN-
MENTS USEFUL IN THE CONDUCT
OF LIFE. I find that this Book
contains more than the Title pro-
mises, and is well calculated to
form the excellent Man, not only
with regard to the World, but
likewise the Will of God.

MASSIEU.

Done at Paris, 5th of June, 1716.

Author of the Book from
Paris, translated from the
French.

I HAVE met, by the Order of
the Lord Chancellor, the Book
entitled, THE KNOWLEDGE OF
THE WORLD, AND THE ATTAIN-
MENT OF VIRTUE, THE CORRECT
OF LIFE. I find that this Book
contains more than the Title pro-
mises, and is well calculated to
form the Christian's mind, not only
with regard to the World, but
likewise the Will of God.

M. A. S. S. S.

Printed in Paris, 1716.

A 3

P R E F A C E

O F T H E
T R A N S L A T O R.

I CANNOT say that I think an apology necessary, for giving the Public a translation of the following scarce and useful treatise; as it, in my opinion, contains a fund of good sense and practicable maxims, adapted to and proved by the exigencies of life. It certainly much better deserves an English dress than romantic adventures, and false attempts at the pathetic, into which French Writers, devoid of the genuine feelings of sensibility,

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lity, are often seduced by a warm imagination, uncorrected by taste or judgement. With spurious attempts arising from this seduction, we have been plentifully supplied from that language.

Our author seems to have been a man of good heart and sound judgement, improved by the great experience of men and things with which his high station and employment unavoidably furnished him.

It might be naturally imagined that a French Writer on this subject would too much encourage a coarse appetite for flattery, in the easy reciprocation and currency of which, their vivacity and companionable turn are chiefly displayed. Monsieur CALLIERES seems to have had an understanding much above this soppory and self-delusion, the futile commerce and gratification of little minds. It may be thought, perhaps,

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perhaps by some, that he is rather too much inclined, in the opening of his subject, to recommend a suppleness of behaviour, and a flimsy disposition that border on meanness; but the whole tenor of his sentiments will fairly acquit him of that imputation. His rules of politeness are totally free from the freaks of caprice, vanity, and affectation. They appear to be solidly founded in prudence and humanity, taste, convenience, and a just sense of propriety. The title of *La Petite Morale*, by which the French commonly distinguish good breeding, and the arts of life practised in the polite world, would suit them well.

There is a striking resemblance between many of the rules laid down by our author, and those scattered through our best essays; but this performance had the ad-

mod

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vantage of priority to many of them, and was nearly cotemporary with the first. They are likewise reduced to the compass of an useful manual for refreshing our attention to the means of conducting ourselves with discretion, and extracting as it were the sweets of life.

His Morality, which is the subject of the second part of the work, is not much defined by methodical divisions, but exemplified in some action or circumstance that bears a strong colour of the virtue recommended. It therefore makes a more lively impression, and is more happily adapted to the uses of life.

I cannot help giving the author great credit for the manly strain of his politics, and his liberal sentiments on religion and government, in the second division of his book. They are extraordinary for a man
born

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born and bred in the double trammels of despotism and authoritative superstition. His notions of the principles and purpose of government, almost define our Constitution in its speculative purity. So humane, rational, and enlarged a view of the relation between a prince and his subjects, is worth our attention in an author of that nation.

It has been the fashion of late, amongst those whose hearts are waxing fat with gain, or public rapine, or the mean pride of selfish gratifications, to look upon the bulk of the people in this land of boasted freedom merely as a sort of dross of the human species. Monsieur CALLIERES, in despite of the national vanity of the French, and their fantastic notions of nobility, pays them a compliment calculated for the meridian of liberty. He makes the public opinion of

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any man's worth and abilities the best recommendation to a public employment. All this from a Frenchman, is a severe satire on those slavish spirits amongst us, who think that every thing is sanctified that is done under the venerable name of government however prostituted, and that a shred of the divine mantle by which sacred Majesty is mystically enveloped, is the portion of every thing in authority. His sentiments are a deep reproach to those born under the English Constitution, ~~notwithstanding~~ (through whatever shifting scenes of connections, denominations, or pretences, they may have run) whose corruption, selfishness, or wilful ignorance, shew them to be unworthy of the birthright of that privilege. A plain man may say thus much, I hope, without any just grounds for suspicion of his being influenced
either

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either by the zeal or spleen of party.

Our author's indignant contempt of the frenzy of ambition sets in a proper light that impotent irritation for conquest, which has so often driven the French to be a pest to themselves, and the rest of Europe. It required, in my opinion, considerable strength of mind to think so freely and justly under the reign of his master Lewis the Fourteenth, when this intoxication was at its height.

I frankly confess, that I have said thus much (but sincerely and from conviction) to obviate any prejudice that might lie against French authors in general, in the mind of any one who might casually take up the book, and to induce him to give it a reading. If he should attribute it to that blind partiality which a translator

com-

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commonly has or professes for his author, I hope that a perusal of the book will in some measure alter his opinion. I have attempted to add to the pleasure of that perusal, by making it read like an original. To transfuse the sense and spirit of an author into as natural an idiom, and free a style of another language, as is consistent with that circumstance, seems to be the business of a translator. Any failure in this attempt the candid reader will pardon. I hope he will not find faults of such a size as to materially detract from his entertainment, or defeat the good sense of the author.

I should be sorry, however, if the reader should be work'd up by his fancy to any extravagant expectations, from what I have said. If he should expect to be struck

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by sentiments quite new, or to be dazzled by paradox and refinement worthy of the profound meditations of that most ingenious puzzler of himself and others, Mr. Rousseau, he will be disappointed.

I have only recommended the book as containing many solid truths of intuitive perception, unwarp'd by prejudice, perverse humours, or habits. Add to these the fruits of experience and reflection, and the result must be, that sterling good sense, which, though no science, is said to be fairly worth the seven.

The reader, therefore, will not be amused with thinking there is more in our author than he can find out, and in guessing what that may be. He may, however, console himself for want of more curious entertainment, by making what he there finds of more use and

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and advantage to him, than can be drawn from a thousand fine-spun systems, that brainfick visionaries dream of in their reveries.

I have preserved the *Conversation*, a mode of writing much in fashion amongst the French, and in my opinion a pleasant vehicle of sentiment; because it takes off from precept all appearance of the decisive tone, and dogmatical air.

I have omitted the latter part of the fifth chapter which treats of the different pronunciation of several French words in different provinces, and various barbarisms in the language, as in my opinion it could not afford either use or entertainment to the English reader. I have likewise omitted the panegyrics alluded to in the close of the work, and bound up with it; as they do not bear any relation to the subject.

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KNOW-

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WORLD, &c. &c.

CONVERSATION THE FIRST.

I Am as good as my word, Sir, in proceeding to give you an account of the sentiments of the Grand Master of Malta, on subjects of greater importance than those which regard the perfection of our language, and the new modes of expression, which have been introduced since he went upon his travels.

He returned to Madam de — a relation of his, where he again met with the Marchioness de — and the Duke de —, who had conceived a great taste for his conversation. After the first compliments on his late voyage to Malta, where he had been with a design of signalizing his zeal for the service of religion which was

B

threaten'd

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threaten'd by the Turks ; says the Mar-
cioneſs, Do you know that I am much
improved by your laſt diſcourſes ; that
they have elevated my mind, and given
me courage enough to inform myſelf of ſe-
veral particulars of which I am at preſent
entirely ignorant, eſpecially thoſe which
relate to the knowledge of the world, and
are moſt uſeful in the conduct of life ?
theſe, in my opinion, ought to be rank'd
in the number of the moſt neceſſary at-
tainments. I believe, continued ſhe, that
there is no neceſſity of my learning either
greek or latin for this purpoſe. I may
moreover diſpenſe with ſome other ſciences,
which people learn only to forget them a-
gain, or to become on that account more
conceited and unfociable. I am convinc-
ed that there are very few capable of in-
ſtructing me in this ſcience in which I
long to be a proficient, and that it re-
quires length of time and great experience
at the expence of the prime of my years ;
judge then of the obligation I ſhall owe
you for your aſſiſtance in my purſuit of
this knowledge, in which I am at preſent
ſo deficient, and ſo ardently deſirous of
acquiring.

¹
which I am

I have

I have sufficient reasons, Madam, replied the Grand Master, to excuse me from expatiating upon a matter so difficult and extensive; but as you have a right to command what you please, and it is incumbent upon me to pay an implicit obedience, I shall give you frankly the sentiments that occur to me on this subject.

CHAP. I.

Of the knowledge of the world. In what it consists. There are two things to be attended to for the regulation of our behaviour, our exterior manners, and our essential conduct.

IT is my opinion then, that the knowledge of the world, and of the grand requisites to a right conduct of life, is that which instructs us in our duty toward God, and teaches us to live well with all mankind. As religion, and its precepts, inculcate what more immediately tends to the discharge of all the duties of a true christian and a good citizen, that is not, I imagine, precisely the thing

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which you request of me, but only what would contribute to form an agreeable, obliging, and well-bred man, who would be carefs'd and receiv'd with pleasure in all companies, and who would really merit the friendship and esteem of all mankind.

That is just the thing, replied the Marchioness, that I desire to be informed of. I hope you will think the ladies of so much consequence as to give them a hint of what would be most conducive to this perfection in the fair sex; that they likewise may be in a capacity of partaking, with the gentlemen, of those fine accomplishments, for the acquisition of which you are so well able to qualify them.

I have not the presumption, answer'd the Grand Master, to arrogate to myself so great an honor, or the injustice to encroach so far upon your province. The most advantageous thing I can do for the ladies, is, to encourage them to follow your example, in causing them to remark the justness of your thoughts, the delicacy of your taste, your disposition to profit by advice, and the other amiable qualities

lities that you daily discover. As to this dissertation which you desire of me ; it is my opinion, that, to arrive at what is call'd a knowledge of the world, we ought first to use our utmost endeavours to obtain a general notion of mankind. We should then gain a particular knowledge of those with whom we are to live, that is, of their inclinations and opinions, whether right or wrong, their good qualities as well as foibles. It is necessary to inform ourselves of the duties annex'd to every station of life, and particularly our own ; and of those points of good-breeding that are practis'd in the polite world, and to behave with exact conformity thereto. For this end, it is requisite to have a competent knowledge of the manners, customs, usages, and the living history of our own country. At the same time we should not be ignorant of those of our neighbours, their different forms of government, genealogies, the rights of their sovereigns, situation, extent, and force of their country. It would moreover be of great use to be well skill'd in the language of those with whom we have the

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greatest commerce, their connections and principal interests, and especially in that art which ought to have the preference to all the arts and sciences, *viz.* That of keeping on good terms with all the world. A man who understands life, is regular in the performance of every social duty. Though he punctually pays that attention which is due to others, he is quite easy as to what he has a right to claim of them. He readily excuses the negligence and little inadvertencies of his friends, and forbears teasing them with reproaches or complaints, which are rather calculated to alienate their affections, than reclaim them. Those who are the greatest novices in life, generally require the strictest attention of their friends, without making any suitable return. This proceeds from their not having made any reflections, abstracted from self, on the duties that are required of them, in order properly to discharge them, and maintain the laws of union and society, so essential to human happiness. For this end a man ought to be bless'd with an engaging, pliant, insinuating disposition, which is able to command

mand its own motions, to regulate its conduct according to the genius and humours that mark the characters of those with whom it is conversant, and to accommodate itself to their passions, as well as prejudices and other foibles, with a view to reclaim them, and bring them over to more just and reasonable sentiments, especially when the taking of some resolution of consequence depends upon it. This is the art of engaging the affections, and disposing the heart at your pleasure, which ought to be regarded as the master-piece of human dexterity. This was the very thing that form'd the first societies, and gave them laws, and establish'd the different degrees of power, which, several afterwards, transmitted to their posterity.

What, says the Duke, do you believe that persuasion had a greater share than force in the establishment of the first sovereignties and degrees of power?

Without doubt, replied the Grand Master; there is nothing more required to convince you of this, than to reflect that all men were equal by nature; that

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the power of those who are raised above the rest drew its origin from the esteem and affection of a certain number of men who judged them most capable of conducting and governing them, by whom they were raised to a condition of obliging others to pay the same obedience. But to return to our subject; the ultimate end of all knowledge of the world is to live well with all mankind, to engage their affections, and acquire their esteem. In order to succeed in these two grand points, there are two principal things to be observed, our exterior manners, or behaviour, and our essential conduct.

C H A P. II.

*Of the exterior manners, and their effects.
Of the means of pleasing in conversation.*

THE greatest part of mankind, continued the Grand Master, form a judgement of others merely from their outward expression, which has greater influence on them than essential qualities. There are two causes of this error: The
one

one is, that it is more easy to judge of what strikes our senses than what is the object of our reason : The other, that whatever attachment men may have to their solid interests, they are notwithstanding, for the most part, more vain than interested. Whoever therefore addresses them in the soothing strain of compliment is sure to please them, as this is food for their vanity. For the opposite reason one would as infallibly excite their resentment and aversion, by accosting them abruptly, and with an air of haughtiness. Our manner of acting has so great an effect on the minds of men, that favours confer'd with an ill grace are frequently lost, when even a refusal would not have given any disgust, provided you had the skill to soften it with a proper expression of your dissatisfaction at not having it in your power to oblige the person who requested the favor of you. It even happens that men are generally more incensed at a contemptuous behaviour than any real injustice or injury offered them, because this contempt shocks their vanity, which is dearer to

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them than any interest whatever. It is incumbent then upon men of every condition in life, to have a particular guard upon their behaviour, in order not to give cause of disgust to those persons with whom they are to live, by any incivility of carriage, disdainful airs, and haughty or harsh expressions, except they are obliged to it in order to express their indignation at any action really blamable, or proceeding unjustifiable in itself. Whoever makes any other use of such a behaviour, not only acts contrary to the common rules of civility and politeness established among all civilized people, but even against his true interest, which is never to incur the ill-will of any man, when he has it in his power to avoid it. If a man on the contrary accustoms himself to say obliging things, and which contribute to the satisfaction of those he converses with, nothing is more likely to establish their esteem and regard, or to spread an advantageous reputation, which may be of greater consequence to him than he is apprised of in the course of life.

These

These maxims have such a foundation in truth, answered the Marchioness, that I am surprized that men can be so infatuated as to fall frequently in a misconduct entirely opposite.

That proceeds, replied the Grand Master, from this cause; that the generality of men will not lay any restraint upon themselves. They had rather indulge a perverse pride they are born with, or some violent and extravagant humour at the expence of their character, than attempt to preserve it by so easy a method as a civil, genteel behaviour. A polite behaviour is not only of infinite service in common life to those who are exact in the observance of it, but likewise in affairs of the highest importance. It is not long, since a prince of a foreign family acquired the esteem and affection of the public in France to such a degree, by his obliging, popular, and engaging manners, that the favor of the people, supported by the fine accomplishments he was possessed of, raised him to so high a pitch, that he was accused of being in a capacity of usurping the throne of his

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Sovereign. A man really well versed in life is not only civil in his deportment to all the world, but has even the faculty of insinuating himself into the hearts of those with whom he converses. For this purpose he improves the opportunities of saying agreeable things from the knowledge he has of their inclinations, opinions, and prejudices; but this he has the address to do with dignity, and without ever descending to a nauseous meanness. He cautiously avoids falling into the fault of those dull, frigid flatterers, who are sometimes even more insupportable than the rude and unbred.

Now we are upon the subject of exterior manners, replied the Duke, I should be extremely glad if the Grand Master would give us his sentiments on the means of pleasing in conversation: This appears to me to be the most obvious method of gaining upon the heart and affections of those with whom we have any intercourse.

The first of all the means, answered the Grand Master, is to have an intention and desire of pleasing. When a
man

man has a strong disposition to any thing, he applies himself with great attention to the means of succeeding in it. It is the property of the passions to open the mind to a discovery of expedients for their gratification. But to return to the subject I am to descant upon : It is my opinion that to please in conversation, we should begin by founding the minds of those we would entertain, in order to put them on their favorite subjects, and that are best suited to their sphere and capacity : Thus you infallibly please a man conceited of his quality, by giving him an opportunity of expatiating upon the nobility of his ancestors. You oblige a gentleman of the blade by leading him into a recital of the sieges and battles he has served in. A good opening to an harangue on public affairs, wins the favor of the minister who was concerned in them. A traveller is made happy by describing the countries he has seen. It is the same case with all other applications of men. This proceeds from a constant endeavour to appear important, by the advantages they presume they have

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have above the rest of mankind; and from their being more fond of those who applaud them, than those who catch at their applause. He then that would please, must employ less of his dexterity in a display of his own talents, than in setting those of others in an advantageous light, and heightening with taste and delicacy what they have well said or done. The sacrifice which he seems to make of his own interest in this point, is an ingenious piece of address, which abridges a long process for him. By this means he makes a greater progress in their esteem and friendship, than he would have done by the most striking things he could have said. He ought moreover to apply himself to the discovery of their predominant passions and favorite opinions, in order not to shock them by sentiments directly opposite; because a contrariety of opinions, as well as humours and inclinations, ordinarily produces aversion, in the same manner as the conformity of them gives birth to friendship.

But,

But, said the lady, when we find errors, and things really culpable in the opinion of others, it is incumbent upon us to disabuse them.

When that happens to be the case, replied the Grand Master, we must, in order to succeed in such an attempt, take several turns and windings, soften'd with certain compliances, which may lead insensibly a person (to whose sentiments we have the appearance of giving up,) to the very point to which one has a design of conducting him. This however is not brought about but by a succession of the gentlest degrees. There are few men masters. of so much eloquence, as to persuade immediately by dint of reasoning. There are many so supple as to insinuate themselves into the good graces of those whom they are solicitous to please; and when they have found the means of pleasing, they will soon likewise find the means to persuade. He then that would attain to this agreeable faculty, must so far divest himself of his own humours as to be able to accommodate himself to those of others.

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others. He must have so much regard to their prejudices, as not to pretend to bend them immediately to receive his opinions, how reasonable soever they may be. He must put himself out of his own character into that of the person with whom he would ingratiate himself, that after so intimate a knowledge of him, he may consider abstractly from his own sentiments and ideas, what will probably be the thoughts of this person on the things he has to say to him, and the effects they are most likely to produce in him. If he has penetration sufficient for this discovery, and suppleness enough to regulate his conduct thereupon, he will not only succeed in his bare intention of pleasing, but insensibly render himself very powerful over his heart.

I must confess, says the Marchioness, that any one who would observe this conduct with regard to me, would gain a prodigious ascendancy over me.

Yet, replied the Lady, every thing that favours of flattery, ought to disgust persons of taste and delicacy.

That

That is true, answered the Duke, but it is gross flattery alone that does really displease. We even frequently see that it has the privilege of being well receiv'd by those to whom it is address'd, tho' it appears nauseous and highly ridiculous to those who are not at all interested in it: but with regard to those little insinuations, and that adroit complaisance of which the Grand Master has just given us an idea, I conceive as well as the Marchioness, that it is very difficult not to be won by them. This is certainly one of the most effectual means of making a progress in the hearts of the ladies.

There is nothing, replied the Grand Master, more capable of polishing and refining the minds of men, and rendering them agreeable in conversation, than an intercourse with the ladies. They inspire us with a desire to please, by a soft insinuation and delicacy of manners. With them is learnt a great part of that good-breeding which is in use among the polite, and in which so great a part of the knowledge of the world consists.

They

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They even contribute sometimes to the acquisition of nobler accomplishments, said the Duke; and a man may be distinguish'd by great actions, who would not have risen above the level of mankind had he not been animated by the desire of pleasing them. It is upon this principle, that our modern romances make us look upon love as the first motive to all the great exploits of their heroes.

C H A P. III.

*Romances give us false ideas of perfection.
The qualities requisite to please in conversation.*

THAT is true, said the Grand Master; but the reading of these works appears to me to be very dangerous, especially to young people, whose judgment is not yet formed, as they give them false ideas of perfection, and often propose bad models: for romances, exclusive of their being stuff'd with strange adventures which shock all probability and common sense, and their transporting their
readers

readers into manners and scenes of life altogether visionary, and the very reverse of daily experience; represent likewise an excess of the passion of love, (which they always attribute to their heroes,) as the very fort of all his virtues and great qualities; instead of representing this excess as a weakness into which he is drawn by too great a propensity to pleasure. * They intirely fully all the splendor of his great achievements, by making

* These remarks were more seasonable at the time they were made than at present, when the old romance is quite exploded. Mr. Fielding's facetious pictures of common life superseded them here. Mr. Crebillon the younger raised good taste and common sense against them in France. In lieu of extravagance and monstrous adventure, we have probable matters of fact; in the contrivance of which there is art, and nature in the representation. In these performances, says Mr. Crebillon, MAN sees MAN as he is, and though they may be less dazzling than the other mode of writing, they are more instructive. His *Egaremens de Cœur*, appears, in my opinion, to be a curious dissection of the human heart. The progressive analysis of the affection of love, seems to be the result of exquisite feeling and reflection. The shifting scene of its natural emotions is happily portrayed, as by turns resembling the whole circle of the passions. I do not however think that the objection which he says lies against that sort of composition, has any weight (*viz*) that many persons read them only to make their application, and esteem a work of this sort in proportion as they can find a handle for depreciating their acquaintance, and discharging all their gall and malignity. The pleasure and profit arising from the nice observation,

making them the necessary result of his passion. They ought not to let us perceive that their heroes perform these prodigious exploits, with the sole view to the reputation they may acquire by them. It is necessary, in order to complete with dignity the idea of that perfection which the romance-writers purpose to give us in these works, merely the fruits of invention, that they represent all these acts of prowess, as having no other end than the public good, which motive alone can render them truly glorious. It is upon this principle, that the ancients have described their heroes as employing their whole lives in purging the earth of monsters, robbers, tyrants, ravishers, and all other disturbers of the public repose.

observation, probability, and judgement which must be displayed in the performance, to give it reality enough to justify this observation in any degree, will I think more than counterbalance its inconveniencies. It is in my opinion a species of writing capable of the best and worst effects in the greatest extent. A well written novel seems to have the advantage of comedy in the following circumstance; though the impressions of the latter are more lively in the representation, those of the former may be more lasting; because, in my opinion, it is a composition more distinctly retained by the memory than the intricacy of the drama.

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Yet, said the Duke, their Hercules, Theseus, Achilles, and all their greatest heroes are by no means insensible of love.

That is true, replied the Grand Master, but they look'd upon this passion in them as inseparable from human nature, and as a kind of relaxation from those arduous enterprises in which they were chiefly engaged; and did not make it the grand business of their lives like the authors of our romances, who make every thought, action, and design of their heroes, to bear some relation to their love; and who endeavour to enduce the young and idle to imitate these false models, by the seducing colours in which they draw them. It is for this reason I would prohibit the reading of those works (tho' full of examples of great virtue) to those who cannot distinguish just from false sentiments.

The Grand Master has given us a very adequate idea of the true hero, replied the Duke; but I question whether, since the heroes of antiquity of whom he has been speaking, and those others of chivalry whose sole employ was redref-

redressing the wrongs of others, there have been any persons who have attained to this perfection of self-forgetfulness, in order to attend wholly to the public good. But to return to the means of pleasing in conversation, I beg the Grand Master to proceed in giving us his sentiments on that subject.

As there is a great variety in conversation, replied the Grand Master, a lively genius, as well as an extensive knowledge, is requisite, to shine in it on all occasions. The principal requisites are a flexible mind capable of treating all sorts of subjects, and that can accommodate itself to the level of all capacities; a happy ease of expression; a natural sprightliness which can enliven the gravest subjects; and a fertility to embellish the most barren; a retentive memory, enriched with a great number of facts which relate to the sciences, liberal arts, history, the public affairs of the present time, and particular adventures of people much known in the world. The greatest part of mankind are fond of being amused like children with little stories, whether true or false; and always prefer
them

them to solid reasoning, intended to correct their foibles. Morality sleeps, says Comedy, and its finest and most useful precepts are tedious and insipid to the generality of men, unless accompanied by lively pictures and sprightly adventures which are applicable to characters.

The Grand Master, says the Marchioness, would confer a farther obligation upon me by communicating his sentiments likewise upon the Bons Mots, and the use of them in conversation.

CHAP. IV.

Of Bons Mots. Of good stories, and their use. That a perfect knowledge of the beauties and delicacies of the language of the country we live in, is requisite to please in the conversation of the polite world. The use of the dead languages.

THE Bons Mots, answered the Grand Master, are esteemed as much for their rarity as intrinsic value; but they are frequently prejudicial to the authors of them, and there is as much danger as difficulty in bringing them to light. It is

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is therefore frequently more discreet to stifle them in their birth, because they pique a man's vanity by discovering something ridiculous in him, which seldom fails of exciting his resentment and revenge. They ought to consist in the justness, force, and novelty of the thought, and a happy application of it couched under a figure, and not in a play upon words which is called a quibble or pun, of which the French politeness begins to purge itself, whilst it yet maintains its ground, in despite of good taste, beyond the Alps and Pyrenees.

The telling of stories likewise, replied the Duke, is a great help and life to conversation, provided they are well chosen.

That is justly observed, said the Grand Master; but they must rise naturally out of the subject of the discourse, and never be intruded at random without any application, which is the practice of some professed story-tellers, who repeat them to all that offer, without ever considering whether they are equally disposed to hear them. They ought to abstain from laughter during the relation, and from previous
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encomiums upon them; because the pleasure which they excite in the hearers, generally arises from their being surprised by some pleasant adventure which they did not foresee. We should likewise avoid a common fault of people who are prodigiously entertaining to themselves while they are guilty of it, that is, a frequent repetition of the same story to the same person. The most entertaining stories are attended with the misfortune of losing the greatest part of their grace with that of novelty, and become even tedious and fatiguing, unless told by a person who has the peculiar art of embellishing them by the lively sallies of a happy imagination, which may make an addition of entertaining circumstances.

A repetition of the same stories is generally observed, said the Duke, to be the foible of old age.

It puts me in mind, replied the Grand Master, of the Abbé T—— whose father was a troublesome and everlasting storyteller. The Abbé was so harrassed beyond all patience by them, that he quitted his father's house merely to deliver himself

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from

from the persecution of being obliged to hear them, and made a voyage to Italy. On his return, he compounded with the old gentleman, and addressing him with an air of chagrin that was natural to him, I tell you frankly Sir, said he, if you repeat again such and such particular stories (which he named to him) I must take a second trip to Italy. This afterwards past into a proverb in those parts, where any one remarkable for wearing out a story was accosted with,—If you tell that once more you will certainly send me to Italy. There are notwithstanding, continued the Grand Master, some story-tellers who can render them agreeable and entertaining, though one has heard them before, by a knack of mimicking the persons who are the subject of them. It is the property of this sort of imitation to raise a laugh. This was Boisrobert's particular excellence, who passed for a great wit, and was a remarkable story-teller. He had a set of stories which he played as an actor does a part in comedy. But as this talent of mimicry favours much of the buffoon, the practice of it ought to be confined to those

those who are paid for making us laugh, and is rather unbecoming the character of a gentleman.

I imagine, replied the Duke, that to please in conversation with people of fashion, a perfect knowledge of the beauties and delicacies of our own would be more necessary than those of the dead languages, and that we should be cautious of falling into the ridiculous foppery of those pedants, who are not able to relish any thing but what the ancients have said either in Greek or Latin, and who are perpetually making quotations one would very gladly dispense with, and by dint of studying these have forgot, or perhaps never well understood their native language. The attainment of these languages is very useful, to enrich ours with those noble productions that remain to us of the great geniuses of antiquity, to whom we are indebted for curious hints in the sciences, and a taste for true eloquence. The dead languages ought to be considered particularly as the means of unlocking to us those invaluable treasures of knowledge. We ought not then to render this study fruitless,

less, like those learned gentlemen, who content themselves with charging their memories with a vast quantity of the terms and idioms of the Greek and Latin, and with hunting after doubtful etymologies, or inventing them after their fashion; who entirely overlook those beautiful thoughts and refined sentiments that form the heart and enlighten the understanding, which ought to be the principal ends of acquiring any language.

C H A P. V.

How a skill in the beauties and delicacies of a language is to be acquired. Of the free and natural air that ought to prevail in our conversation. Of the choice of terms, and the bad effects of an ill choice. Of the different effects produced by the tone and air with which we speak.

A TASTE of the beauties and niceties of our language, continued the Grand Master, is acquired by reading the best authors, but more especially by the conversation of the best company. It chiefly consists in a thorough knowledge of

of what has been established by fashionable use, which is the rule of all living languages. But we ought not to have so scrupulous a delicacy in this point as not to admit of common forms of expression in common conversation, or to affect to express ourselves always in cull'd and curious terms. There ought to be diffused through our whole conversation a free, natural air, incompatible with that exactness which we should do well to observe in writing, when we have time to premeditate, and to put our composition into regular order. But in regard to the stile of common conversation, if it is so studied, and so nicely arranged, and carries with it so visible an attempt of appearing always quite eloquent and ingenious; this laboured affectation is the bane of every grace. It becomes disgusting and tiresome to those who compose the audience of these fine speakers, who are accustomed to hear themselves, and to be the only persons they ever please.

There cannot be a more undoubted truth, answered the Marchioness, than this observation of the Grand Master. I am

convinced of it from my own experience. I knew a gentleman who weighed every syllable that he spoke, and who was extremely solicitous about arranging his words. He passed for a polite and ingenious man among those of his own set, but always put me to torture whenever I heard him speak. I think the heedless manner of the Duke de ——— much preferable, who is often guilty of little inaccuracies, but always expresses himself with a natural ease, and without a tincture of affectation. We must likewise avoid running into the opposite extreme, which is that of too great a negligence in the choice of our terms, when we make use of low phrases that convey mean ideas, or those that are grown quite obsolete. We should do well likewise to use those with caution that are entirely new, a too frequent repetition of which I have elsewhere remarked to be trifling and ridiculous. We ought to endeavour to get rid of what are called favourite expressions, which we are apt to use too often, and to know how to make choice of the most proper terms, and that are most in use, in order to express

press our thoughts with the greatest perspicuity. A man who does not understand the meaning of the terms he uses, as well in a proper as figurative sense, is liable to great inconvenience. He sometimes, without intention, offends those to whom he addresses himself. He passes for a rude unbred fellow, or exposes himself by his ignorance.

I imagine too, said the Duke, that it is very necessary to correct our false pronunciation and provincial accent.

That is true, replied the Grand Master, for there is frequently nothing more required than a word falsely pronounced, or with a wrong accent, to turn a man into ridicule, who might be, in every other respect, deserving of your esteem; because the generality of men attend to externals, and catch eagerly at the most trivial faults of others, without ever troubling themselves to consider their good qualities. It is my opinion, continued the Grand Master, that a good pronunciation, and a proper care in the choice of our terms, are not the only things necessary to succeed in conversation.

versation. We ought likewise to regulate the tone and air with which we speak, because these have no small efficacy in winning upon the inclinations of those we converse with, or on the other hand in creating a disgust. A thing rather agreeable in itself, said with an imperious air and rude tone, never fails to displease; and a thing on the contrary disagreeable in itself, is greatly softened by a pleasing tone of voice and an engaging air.

C H A P. VI.

Sequel of the means of pleasing in conversation. What ought to be avoided. Of the different species of the Tiresome in conversation.

THERE is no doubt of that, replied the Grand Master. There are two manners, entirely opposite, of expressing the same sentiment. These depend not only on the choice of terms, of which there are the arrogant, the contemptuous, and harsh; and the obliging, agreeable, and genteel, to signify the same thing.

thing. There is another kind of language which, as the Duke has well observ'd, depends on the different tones of voice. Of these there are the haughty, rude, menacing and sneering; and likewise the soft, humble, compassionate and soothing. This kind of music is expressive of the various sentiments of friendship, hatred, contempt, and every passion of the person who makes use of them. There is likewise the air and motion of the physiognomy, and particularly of the eyes, which are justly call'd the mirrors of the soul, by which we even pry into her thoughts when she does not put a restraint upon natural emotions, or endeavour to mask them under an opposite appearance. The exterior emotions of those with whom we converse, excite in us aversion or inclination, according to the sentiments we discover in them relative to what affects us. Thus the man of an haughty and impetuous temper, who addresses us with a rude menacing tone, raises our indignation; and the man of a soft easy disposition, who addresses us with an agreeable tone of voice and

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an engaging manner, who expresses a desire of pleasing and obliging, excites in us the same sentiments with regard to himself. It is for the same reason, that an air of chagrin is infused into those before whom we let it appear. We should be careful therefore when we are going into the company of those particularly whom we are studious of pleasing, to shew a serene countenance, and rather expressive of joy than gloom.

Tho' a sprightly air is generally very agreeable, continued the Grand Master, it has its excess. This may contribute to a disadvantageous opinion of the understanding of the person who lightly gives a loose to transports of mirth, and violent bursts of laughter. It seldom happens, that these immoderate laughers are people of much wit; and it ever appears well to observe a decent moderation in that particular, especially in those who are rais'd to any considerable dignity by birth or employment. They ought to regulate their external appearance, in order not to give their inferiours room to enter into too great a point

point of familiarity with them, which is attended with great inconvenience. We ought likewise to avoid that cold air of indifference which certain persons affect, who seem always to be afraid that one shall abuse their kindness, and who scarce ever fail to disgust those with whom they live. But the most dangerous conduct is that of accustoming oneself to a habit of raillery, which has a strong tincture of contempt and malignity. There is not a surer method of exciting an implacable hatred against a man of whatever condition, from the most elevated to the lowest ranks of life, than a frequent use of raillery; because, of all the injuries you can do mankind, there is nothing, generally speaking, that they bear more impatiently, than to see themselves turn'd into ridicule: The reason is, that these strokes of raillery touch the quickest of all their passions, which is that of inordinate self-love, and the constant desire with which this inspires them of making themselves esteemed by others. They have so tender a sense in that point, that they can-

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not even bear the contempt of those they themselves do not esteem.

I imagine, replied the Duke, that one of the most necessary things yet to please in conversation, is, to accustom ourselves to give a proper attention to what is said to us. Nothing is more disagreeable than the company of those absent people, whose minds always seem to have made an excursion from their bodies, who oblige you to repeat the same thing several times, and who never make a suitable answer, because they never hear what you say. This occasioned a man of sense to say, when he commended the judgement of any one, Mr. Such-a-one lends a good attention to what is said to him. There is likewise a want of attention which proceeds from the vivacity and impatience of certain persons, who will put you several questions successively without waiting for an answer to the first, or who will not give you time to speak.

This last fault is common to the generality of the French nation, replied the Grand Master. They are naturally so lively

lively and impatient, that they can scarce ever prevail on themselves to hear those they converse with to the end. A Frenchman is generally for understanding the whole scope of your intention from the first word; or rather, he is so taken up with, and so full of his own thoughts, that his only care is to make himself heard. This may be easily remarked in our common conversation when we speak almost all together, especially if any dispute arises; which is not only very disagreeable, and highly inconsistent with the means of pleasing in conversation; but likewise inconvenient to the last degree in treating of affairs whether publick or private. There is a necessity generally of giving a good attention, in order to speak afterwards to the purpose, and to make a just answer; and this is one of the most necessary rules in conversation. We ought, moreover, to accustom ourselves to propose our sentiments, as no more than probable opinions, and not as decisions to which all the world ought immediately to subscribe; because this is an attempt to deprive those we
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converse with of the natural right which they have of judging, for themselves, of those matters that are brought upon the carpet. It is for this reason that those gentlemen who are so decisive, are apt to rouse those they converse with, and excite in them a spirit of contradiction, even to their most reasonable opinions. Those who grow as hot in disputing on the most trivial points, as affairs of the utmost consequence, are likewise very disagreeable in conversation. We ought to know how to treat the subjects that occur with a sprightly ease, with an agreeable pleasantry, and a disinterestedness always ready to abandon the dispute when it becomes too warm or serious. If it is an affair of consequence, we should explain our thoughts and arguments with clearness and composure, and be always ready to surrender to truth, when we feel conviction, without ever piquing ourselves upon the vain honour of supporting our first opinions. When we have attained to the knowledge of the truth, we ought to communicate it to others with the greatest perspicuity, without making use of difficult terms, or harsh

harsh and stinging expressions, or such as carry the least contempt with them. When those who are fond of contest appear determined against conviction, and obstinately bent upon combating the truth with false reasoning, we should desist from any farther contradiction; neither making fruitless efforts to convince them, nor triumphing over their errors. A person who takes this course, does not give up any advantage, but carries away the true prize of conversation; for he not only pleases those persons who have been nothing more than hearers, who have not taken any part in the dispute, but likewise those to whom he has given up the vain honour of having the last word, and of having exceeded him in obstinacy.

I am sensible, said the Marchioness, of the truth and justness of these observations.

For my part, replied the Lady, I see nothing very marvellous in them, being what few people can be unacquainted with.

He does not produce them as marvellous, replied the Marchioness, but only as useful and reasonable. It is matter of
astonish-

astonishment, that of so many people who are apprised of them, and are capable of judging of their utility, there are so very few who put them in practice, who do not suffer themselves to be led into a misconduct so directly opposite. What a difference is there between a person who conforms exactly to what the Grand Master has so judiciously observed to us, and those sour and perverse people who are ever ready to dispute upon matters of the utmost indifference, solely through a passion for contradiction; and who will even contradict themselves, provided their antagonist in the argument should be brought over to their opinion. How preferable is a person who expresses his sentiments with caution and modesty, to some of our acquaintance, who, with lofty airs and a presuming self-sufficiency, require our implicit faith on their bare assertion in particulars they are least acquainted with, and in which they are the most incompetent judges. I cannot bear, continued the Marchioness, those people who appear to be so happy in themselves, insipid and disagreeable as they are, who
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are so extremely satisfied with every thing they say and do; who are so charm'd with it that they will not deign to give any attention to others, or even suffer them to speak; those gentlemen who have seen every thing, who know every thing, who interrupt every one that speaks, in order to talk perpetually of themselves, or of things that have relation to their own vanity; who produce themselves for examples, and quote what they have said, or what they have done, to give a sanction to what they would fain have believed. But it is not sufficient to remark diligently every means of succeeding: it is farther necessary to remark the faults we ought to avoid. I think therefore, that it would be right to examine the cause of our being tired of so many kinds of people; and I beg the Grand Master to give us his sentiments on this point.

You do not consider, replied the Grand Master, to what a danger you expose me. The gentlemen whom I may distinguish by the appellation of the Tiresome, are formidable in their numbers; and it requires

quires a good deal of hardiness to attack them.

That is true, answered the Marchioness; but there is this convenience with regard to them, that you may represent them even to themselves without their ever making any application of the portrait which you draw: a man may tire you to death, who believes himself all the while to be the most agreeable and entertaining creature in the world.

I see, Madam, that I must obey you in every thing, replied the Grand Master; but do not let me add one more to the number of the Tiresome, while I make them the subject of my conversation.

You run no risque of that sort, replied the Marchioness, as you speak precisely what each subject requires. You are not like those gentlemen who, having at first had the good success to be entertaining, become at length troublesome and disgusting by dint of exhausting the subject, and not knowing how to give the conversation a turn.

You have just remark'd, Madam, answered the Grand Master, one of the principal

principal means of pleasing in conversation, which is the art of diversifying it, and making an easy transition from one subject to another, and taking, as we say, the flower from the thorn, in order to be equally instructive and entertaining, instead of tiring us out with a long train of reasoning. Into this practice those pedants have a great propensity to fall, who are novices in regard to the knowledge of the world, and this art of enlivening and embellishing the subjects they speak of. There is scarce a subject so dry but it may be introduced into conversation, provided it be skilfully managed; as in sculpture, an artist of prime skill produces exquisite pieces of the most common materials: For the opposite reason, the most agreeable and sprightly subjects may be flatten'd by those cold insipid pedants who never had a thought of their own, and whose abilities are confined to the knowledge of what others have said; and especially those extravagant strainers after ancient etymologies, who are not satisfied with those which custom has received, and
who

who often invent others according to their own fancy, upon some false resemblance of sounds between words which they never really met with. To establish them they make long dissertations, which the good taste of the public rejects as tedious and useless. Except, therefore, these pretended scholars contrive to enliven these subjects so barren, and so little to any kind of purpose, we shall put them in the van of the Tiresome in conversation, if Madam the Marchioness be pleased to give her consent.

I give my consent very readily, answered the Marchioness; but I demand a place next to them for those awkward ralliers who grow pleasant upon every kind of subject, and who never spoke with a serious air in their lives; whose silly conversation consists of obscene double entendres, and quibbles so flat and trite; who laugh alone at what they say, and promise to make you mighty merry, which they never perform. Permit me yet, continued the Marchioness, to add to these those declared enemies of truth, who never open their mouths but
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to utter some falsehood or cruel slander; those people who roll about from house to house to communicate in one place what passes in another; and who come to take you off from some serious or agreeable employment, to teaze you with their folly and impertinence.

I would likewise, replied the Duke, (addressing himself to the Marchioness) desire a place for those who are for ever inquisitive, and who come to question you about affairs that do not in the least concern them, and in which you are not obliged to satisfy them; who would enter into a full account of your designs, and your most particular affairs; those eternal givers of counsel one never desires of them, who are for ever reasoning upon the affairs of others, and conduct their own so ill; those people equally ignorant and idle, who make transitions to the good or bad weather, and every moment let the conversation drop, because they are at a loss what to say to you; who infect you with their own barrenness and stupidity, and reduce you almost to the same distress of not knowing

ing with what subject to entertain them. Add those who are fond of making long relations of adventures or things which have nothing interesting in them; who, not content with dwelling upon minute circumstances, swell them out with useless digressions, till they tire their hearers, and exhaust their utmost patience. Another set are those gloomy wretches who censure every thing, who are determined never to be pleased in their lives; who are always presaging something ill of the affairs of state; who take the part of our enemies, and pass the greatest encomiums upon them, and who affect to diminish their loss and our advantages; who take a pleasure in dispersing ill news, and contradicting the good.

And I in return, said the lady, desire to add to your list those mysterious gentlemen, who make a secret of the most insignificant trifle; who whisper you in the ear, on their return from court, that a courier is arrived, without telling you what he brought; or some other piece of news of the like importance, which they have told to twenty
other

other persons before you with the same affectation of mystery; and by certain shrugs and airs of importance, would make you believe that they are deep in the secrets of state.

All these people, said the Grand Master, who are thus tiresome, are in my opinion born so, and there is no necessity of giving them a new title. They put me in mind of the plague I suffered from one of those bold politicians who exhaust their own arguments and our patience upon foreign affairs, of which they are generally very ill inform'd. If they had travelled I could excuse them, because they might bring us acquainted with several curious circumstances relative to the manners and way of life in the countries they had seen. The person I speak of has never been out of the jurisdiction of the parliament of Paris, yet he decided as positively on the fate of the states of Europe, as if he had them entirely in his hands. As he was a man of some consequence, I was obliged to bear with his false reasoning founded on the faith of foreign gazettes,

gazettes, and of libels that are dispersed by our enemies, or those who envy us, of which he always takes care to provide himself. He immediately sets himself to commend those ignorant and mercenary scribblers, who attempt to give a sanction in their writings to the paltry stuff which is dispersed through all public places *. He admires their insipid pleasantries, and weak arguments founded on facts often supposed or misrepresented; and after having harrassed me to death, he seeks out for some one else to persecute in the same manner.

I would prefer, said the Marchioness, those gentlemen who have so strong a curiosity for foreign news, and who are so fond of expatiating upon publick affairs, to those who entertain us on no other subject than their own private concerns, especially those who come to give us a detail of a tedious lawsuit. I not long ago bore with such a relation of Mons. the Count de——He com-

* I suppose the author means those party writers who work up a vague story to their purpose, however void of foundation, or however the absurdity of it may stare them in the face.

plained

plained to me of the injustice and hard sentence of his judges. He told me, that the reporter of his case had suffered himself to be corrupted by the charms of a lady whom he named to me. He talk'd to me of evocation, civil requests, relief of appeal, royal letters, and other barbarous terms, which scare those who have not like him the misfortune to be obliged to understand them. I was overwhelmed with reasons, and precedents of right and custom, in order to prove to me that nothing could be more just than his cause. He pleaded over his whole cause to me most unmercifully, without ever considering that I was not his judge.

It is true, said the Grand Master, that there are a great many people whose conversation is tedious and heavy. This proceeds commonly from the bad choice they make of their subjects, which are not at all interesting to those to whom they address themselves, and which are not calculated either to instruct or to entertain; which are the two principal ends that reasonable men would propose

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so themselves in their conversation. We should not talk like those who have the faculty of saying a great deal and yet nothing at all; whose words have no effect upon the mind, which rejects them as barren and void of sense and matter. This necessarily creates a weariness of mind: For men being born with the faculty of reasoning on the subjects that occur, endeavour to exercise this gift of heaven; and as they have curiosity to learn, attempt to acquire fresh knowledge in the conversation of those with whom they have an intercourse. But it is necessary to have the art of putting them upon subjects that are agreeable to them, and suited to their capacity. I have remark'd, continued the Grand Master, that a man of sense and merit may sometimes be very disagreeable in companies that he is not suited to, for instance, of young debauchees and libertines; because he is a restraint upon them, and does not entertain them with things to their taste. But he can however take the better part, and cultivate a connection with those of a suitable character,

rather, instead of an unprofitable attempt to play the agreeable, and the good companion, with those who are not disposed to give him a favourable reception, and whose esteem is not worth the constraint he must put upon himself to acquire it. A man of a good natural understanding knows how to conduct himself according to the circumstances of time, place, and person, in order not to be disagreeable, or to incommode his company. It is a different case, continued the Grand Master, with all these various sorts of that Tirefom that we have been just examining, and of several other kinds, because these are people who either want good natural sense, or else are blinded by a vain opinion which they have of their own merit and accomplishments, or are conceited of their quality; which leads them into a false persuasion, that they are always entitled to our applause. It is a miserable thing to have the dead weight of the conversation of all these we have distinguished by the title of the Tirefom to bear, when good breeding will not permit us to break from it.

But it would be right to examine how far this good breeding ought to carry us, and whether we must make ourselves slaves to every impertinent that should fall in our way; for I believe it has its limits.

C H A P. VII.

Of the rules of good breeding.

TH A T does not admit of a doubt, replied the Grand Master, but the country of good breeding, if I may be allowed the expression, is of vast extent.

I beg the favour of the Grand Master, replied the Marchioness, that we may make a voyage to it in his company; for it is my opinion, that great discoveries may be made there, for the regulation of our conduct in the ordinary actions of our life.

It is true, replied the Grand Master, that those rules of good-breeding, which are observed among the polite, constitute a considerable part of the knowledge of the world, and of the arts of life.

These

These are a kind of unwritten laws, established by the long use and unanimous consent of all well bred people, who have annexed censure or ridicule to any transgression of them. But as these points of good breeding are almost infinite, it wou'd be very difficult to lay down any fix'd rules about them. There are some, continued the Grand Master, which are general, and adapted to all societies and to all conditions. There are others which are particular, and which depend on the difference of customs and manners of each nation, and likewise of conditions, sexes, ages, and professions. There are some which are founded in reason and discretion, decency, modesty and other virtues. There are others which depend purely upon the caprice of fashion, and which have relation to persons, times, places and occasions. We ought principally to be acquainted with those that are observed in the society of which we are members, and which form a character of genteel behaviour and politeness, which it is incumbent upon all men to acquire in their respective stations of life.

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Here is an excellent plan, said the Duke, of the different rules of good breeding; but it were to be wish'd that the Grand Master would enter into a larger detail, in citing some instances of those which are general, and which are suited to all mankind; and likewise of the particular ones which are adapted only to certain persons, and in certain places.

Since you desire some instances, replied the Grand Master, I will begin by answering the Marchioness's question relative to those gentlemen of whom we are so apt to grow tired. It is a piece of good breeding universally receiv'd, to carry it genteely to all the world, and to make a proper return to the civilities we receive. When a man of this cast engages us in conversation, good manners will not permit us to let him know how troublesome he is, and good nature will not suffer us to mortify our acquaintance.

That is true, replied the Marchioness, but this acquaintance of ours is sometimes found to be so tedious, as to put it out of our power to observe this
piece

piece of good manners. I know, for instance, a man of the court, with whom one can scarce ever fall into conversation, that he does not put us on the subject of pedigree, in order to take occasion to speak of his own. He is endless when he is once set in to talk of his ancestors, and those, perhaps, who were nothing at all to him. He was the other day in company at madam D——'s where, for my sins, I likewise happen'd to be; he told us that Gualtier de——, to whom he was determined to trace up his descent, was slain in battle; that this Gualtier had three sons, one of whom was call'd John, another Alain, and the third George; that the first was chief of the name and arms; that from the second was derived the branch of——, from the other of——. He afterwards gave us a detail of their descendants, their employs, their marriages, and other things as little interesting or entertaining. He then got upon heraldry, the jargon of which he has at his fingers ends, and which he regards as the first and most necessary of all sciences. He talk'd to us of the crest, the

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orle, the tressure, the helmet, the mafcle, and other barbarous terms which seem to be invented on purpose to give the ladies the spleen, who have not the same conceit in that particular as himself.

The ladies, replied the Grand Master, have priviledges which the men have not. They may regulate the subject of conversation without any offence against good breeding.

Yes, to men polite as yourself, replied the Marchioness, and in happier times than the present; but now we are obliged to bear with many other disagreeable subjects different from those of heraldry and pedigree; and the generality of young people address discourses to us, in which good breeding is still less observed.

Yet, madam, replied the Grand Master, there is no part of it more indispensable than that which regards the respect and complaisance due to the ladies; and those who are so extremely rude as to be deficient in this point, are commonly more remiss in their observance of every other part of it: for there is no power that commands respect with greater ease than that of beauty.

This

This, replied the Marchioness, might have been the case formerly, but there is a power at present more respected, I mean that of favour and credit at court; and whoever is capable of giving proofs of it, is sure to command the most exact complaisance.

There is, said the Grand Master, a general rule which appears useful and effectual for keeping well with all the world; that is, when we speak of ourselves, to make use of expressions that are humble and modest, and to raise those we converse with. In order to do this with ease, we should accustom ourselves to address our equals as if they were our superiors, and our inferiors as if upon a level with us. If we are afraid that this would be debasing ourselves, we are imposed upon by our own pride; for the man of a modest and humble behaviour most essentially raises himself while he condescends; and it is the property of virtues to command the respect of those who are not possessed of them.

This observation is in my opinion very just, replied the Duke; and in order to

put it in practice, it seems very necessary to understand perfectly a certain difference which there is in the way of expressing things that have in fact the same purport, and which common people generally confound, whilst those who have been much in the world, and are better inform'd of the punctilios that are there observed, make the proper distinction. We say, for instance, to express the same thing,—I was with Mr. Such-a-one, we were together, or he was with me. The first of these expressions is a mark of the inferior light in which a person who makes use of it sets himself in regard to the person he speaks of; the second, of his putting himself upon a level with him; and the third, of his assuming to himself a superiority. There are abundance of people who make a wrong use of these different modes of expression, some through an absurd pride, others through ignorance of any difference in them. I know several at court who, speaking of a person who is superior to them in birth and station, will say that he was with them. One ought in this case to distinguish the highest

highest rank, and say, that Monsieur the Count was with Monsieur the Marquis; and that Monsieur the Marquis and Monsieur the Count were with Monsieur the Prince, or Monsieur the Duke; or at least, that Monsieur the Prince was accompanied by Monsieur the Marquis, or Monsieur the Count.

The Spaniards, said the Grand Master, are very delicate in this point, and pay a vast attention to these distinctions, even among those who are of the same quality, as they have Grandees of different rank. Those of the first and principal families, endeavour to distinguish themselves by a different address. This puts me in mind of my being at Madrid with a Grandee of the first rank, when another of the second saluted him in passing the coach window, with, I kiss your Excellence's hand; to whom he return'd, I kiss your Lordship's, which is a title inferior to that of Excellence. The other Grandee piqued at this answer, passing us again in the second turn of the ring, accosted the person whom I accompanied, with, I kiss your lordship's hands; and

was answer'd with, I kiss your Excellence's, by this Grandee of the first rank; at which, when I signified my surprize, and ask'd the reason of his giving him the title of Excellence when he had only the title of Lordship given him, and why he only return'd the title of Lordship when the same Grandee had before complimented him with that of Excellence? his answer was, It is very well, so we are never just upon a level.

This answer, said the Duke, is a refinement of the Spanish pride, which is quite the reverse of that politeness, which we would wish establish'd amongst us. — But to return to our own manners; one says with great propriety of an equal, and likewise a superior, he is of the number of my friends: but when you accost an equal with I am your friend, or of your friends, good breeding requires that you add, and your servant. This softening is necessary to smoothe that superiority which he seems to assume who makes use of this expression, even tho' it should be authorised by a great intimacy with the person to whom it is address'd.

This

This is well remark'd, replied the Grand Master ; for it is a piece of good manners universally receiv'd, and in esteem among all civiliz'd nations, to speak modestly of one's self, and advantageously of others. We may compare it to the finest gold, which retains its value in all countries without regard to the impression it bears ; by observing this rule, therefore, a person is sure of being well received, and of pleasing in all languages. With regard to those particular kinds of good breeding which are annex'd to each rank or profession, to different sexes and ages as well as times and occasions, or the place one may happen to be in ; I have already said, that there is so great a variety of them, that it is impossible to lay down fix'd rules about them. I shall only add, that there are two sorts of them, the one necessary, the other arbitrary, and therefore different in each country. I may rank among the necessary ones that modesty which ought to be conspicuous not only in the actions but likewise in the conversation of the clergy beyond those of all other professions ; because,
exclusive

exclusive of the duties particularly annex'd to their station, they are obliged to set an example to others; it is on account of this obligation, that nothing has a more unseemly appearance, than a discourse full of vanity and ostentation out of the mouth of an ecclesiastic of any rank or order.

I beg, said the Marchioness, that the Grand Master would mention some of those rules which have a more immediate relation to the ladies.

I have told you already, answer'd the Grand Master, that I have nothing better to propose to them, than to follow your example. You discover a sound judgment in those subjects that occur, without piquing yourself upon your knowledge; and are always ready to pay a deference to the sentiments of others, notwithstanding the justness and delicacy of your own. Nothing can be more becoming a beautiful and amiable young lady, than such a conduct; and nothing, on the contrary, a greater breach of decorum, than for a lady to be decisive on subjects she does not understand.

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The lady of the house was piqued at this observation, because she was very forward in her decisions upon all subjects, and grew quite impatient of the compliments which the Grand Master frequently paid the Marchioness. But my dear cousin, said she, you would not mean that the ladies alone offend in this particular, and that the generality of men do not decide as confidently upon matters they are unacquainted with; thus the instance you have cited serves no other purpose, than to discover your earnest desire of saying gallant things to Madam the Marchioness, instead of complying with the request she made you, which was to produce instances of those rules of good breeding which peculiarly relate to the fair sex.

I confess, madam, replied the Grand Master, that this rule of behaviour concerns both sexes, and that the gentlemen are as frequent as the ladies in the transgression of it; but as the ladies are rarely great students, and do not, or at least ought not to pique themselves upon their learning, a greater reserve is requir'd in them,

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them, and a stricter observance of this decorum. In continuing to give you farther instances of good breeding which are peculiarly applicable to the ladies, I must tell you, that one of the most indispensable is, never to exceed the limits which modesty ought to prescribe to their conversation; nor to give themselves a loose either in the use of too great freedom of expression, or in permitting it in their presence.

It is my opinion my dear cousin, said the Lady, that you would confine us, as they say, to high Lent; and that a woman of character who has nothing to reproach herself with in her conduct, may very well hear raillery on certain subjects rather a little gay, which frequently occur in the conversation of people much acquainted with the world, without offending against decency, or being obliged to put herself in a vehement rage against those who introduced them.

I am entirely of your opinion, replied the Grand Master, in regard to her admitting raillery to a certain point, provided

vided that what is said be capable of a decent explanation; and that she does not use or suffer terms that would shock a chaste and delicate ear; upon these conditions I not only give my consent, that she permit genteel raillery and a seasonable pleasantry, which is allowable in the company of the ladies; but it is even what I would recommend to her, as a behaviour by far more commendable than the affected severity of those ill-natured prudes, who having lost the gaiety of youth and every other grace, cannot bear a sprightly conversation, and put the most criminal interpretations on the most innocent discourse. There are very few things that one might not say before a woman of reputation, without her being obliged, by a regard to decency, to take any umbrage. This depends upon the choice of terms, and the turn one gives things; and this good choice, and delicate turn, form one of the most necessary rules of good breeding to be observed in the conversation of the ladies, which cannot be always as solemn and grave as that of our doctors of the Sorbonne.

C H A P.

C H A P. VIII.

Of the rules of good breeding, dependent upon particular customs of certain countries.

THESE points of good breeding cannot be set in a clearer light, said the Duke; but as, beside the necessary ones, there are others which the Grand Master calls arbitrary, because they depend upon the countries you are in, and as he is acquainted with those that are observed in the different courts of Europe, I believe the ladies will approve of my requesting the favour of him to give us some instances of those which are different from our own.

There is, replied the Grand Master, in most of the courts of Europe, the same air of politeness diffused through the principal subjects which compose them; the same regards, the same attentions, the same sollicitude to please those in favour. The essentials of politeness, therefore, are not so different as one would imagine; and the difference lies only in externals; as, in particular customs and fashions of dress,

dress, in ceremonies and marks of the respect and civility which they pay each other. But as this would engage us in too long a detail, I shall only produce a few examples which differ from our practice, and that of some of our neighbours. When the late King commanded his armies in person, he admitted his officers to his table in camp, and there they remained covered in his presence, but in no other place; and they observed the same custom when they eat with our Princes and Generals. In Germany, and the kingdoms of the North, it is a remark of respect to be uncovered at the tables of princes during their repast; the inferior officers observe the same behaviour with regard to their Generals; and it would be there deemed a want of respect to be covered at the table of a Prince, or any other person of great distinction. In Italy, when you dine with a Cardinal, you are obliged by their rules of politeness, not to call for any thing to drink till the Cardinal himself has first drunk. In France, a person calls when he has inclination. In Germany, and the North,

North, it is a piece of civility and genteel behaviour for a Prince to drink first to the health of the person or persons he entertains, and to cause the same glass or cup to be presented to them, commonly filled with the same wine; and it is not with them a want of breeding to drink out of the same glass, but a mark of freedom and friendship. The ladies likewise drink first, and then present or cause to be presented their glass, with some of the wine that remains, to the person whose health they drank, without this passing for a particular favour, as with us. When any considerable person is determined to be let blood, he first apprises his friends and relations of it, and it is a ceremony established in that country, for every one to send him the day he is let blood a present of some trinket. They likewise make each other presents, not only on the commencement of the new year, but likewise on the feast of that Saint whose name they bear, and on the birth-day of any person of great distinction; and to be polite, you must dress in excessively rich suits on the birth-day of the Sovereign.

reign. This is a custom which they have adoped from Spain, where it is called to be dressed de Gala. It is not yet introduced amongst us, though it is received in several courts of Europe, and particularly in that of the Emperor, and the Princes of Italy. They make great rejoicings on this day, and the Prince receives the compliments of the nobility, and foreign ministers resident there. In Italy, at the Emperor's, and several other courts of Europe, the rules of good breeding require you to make your compliments on the principal feasts of the year. These consist of fresh professions of service and friendship reciprocally, and in wishing each other prosperity. They send the same compliments some days before Christmas by letters, which they call de Bonnes Fetes, to their principal friends, their absent patrons, and even to the Sovereign himself. The Princes of Italy, the Cardinals, and other persons of distinction of that country, are very punctual in making returns in the civilest terms. There is no nation in the world more exact in every puncto of good breeding,

breeding, or that understands the arts of life better than the Italians. They pay great regard to, and live in a polite and respectful manner with each other; and there is no nation more nice and sensible of affronts and incivilities, improprieties, or omissions.

Though I am by no means an advocate for the Italian ceremonies in general, replied the Duke, because they carry too much restraint with them, I approve of the custom of writing to the Sovereign and other persons of consequence to whom they are attached: because this intercourse draws from them fresh marks of their friendship and esteem.

For my part, replied the Lady, I am rather for imitating that piece of civility, which is practised in Germany and the North, I mean that of making frequent little presents. This has an air of politeness and magnificence which supports friendship and society. A picture, a trinket, any trifle given quite a propos, is a satisfaction to the person who receives it; and there is a double pleasure in making

making and receiving presents in a polite manner.

I do not approve, said the Duke, of the restraint which the Cardinals lay on those whom they entertain; who presume not to drink till they have drunk the first glass.

And I have as great an objection, replied the Marchioness, (begging the gentlemens pardon of the North) to the fashion of drinking out of the same glass, and particularly in regard to the ladies. It has an appearance of indecorum, which would make me wish that they would devise some other method of expressing their freedom. I would likewise wish to abolish the custom which they have introduced, of being uncovered, let it be ever so cold, when they dine with Princes or Generals. But it is my opinion, continued the Marchioness, that Princes have not well understood their own interest, when they have established such marks of the respect that is paid them, as are inconvenient to their courtiers; for they would pay them those respects with greater pleasure, if they were made consistent with

with the ease and convenience of those who made their court to them. It would be the very same thing with regard to them, if they declared it to be a mark of respect to be covered before them; because, to be covered or uncovered are things indifferent in themselves, and it is the opinion alone that is annexed to these things that constitutes the difference. We have a ready instance of this in the Turks, who never take off their turbans in the presence of their Sovereigns; and yet we can by no means say that they are served with less respect than our princes. I promise you then, said the Marchioness smiling, that if I should chance to become a Queen, it should be an established thing in my court, that persons who were uncovered at my table in an extremely cold season, should be deemed ill-bred. It should be likewise a piece of ill-breeding to be covered in extreme heat. I would publish an edict, injoining all the ladies who came to make their court to me, to sit in handsome easy chairs, as well at my court as toilette, on pain of those being declared utterly ignorant of the manner
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of living in the polite world, who should, in conversation with me, stand when I was seated. I would cause all the low stools and folding chairs, and other inventions of female pride and vanity to be burnt, as things prejudicial to society.

The Grand Master was much pleased with these decrees of the Marchioness. If you ordained a great many rules of this sort, replied he, you would succeed well in extending your empire, and people would come in crowds to encrease the number of your subjects; for there is no power more natural, or more solidly established, than that which is founded on the happiness and ease of the people who are subject to it; because they have an interest in the support of it *.

This remark appears to me to be worthy of the Grand Master, as are all those which he has made to us on the subject of politeness, and the means of pleasing in conversation, and of being well with all the world. I have great obligations

* A sentiment that ought to be written in letters of gold on the throne of every Sovereign upon earth.

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to him on that score, and shall endeavour to profit by them.

Be pleased to remember, Madam, replied the Grand Master, that I did not pretend to strike out any thing quite new. I am fully persuaded, that an understanding so enlightened as yours, had before suggested to you every thing that could be said to the purpose on that subject; and that I have no other merit than that of always obeying your commands with the greatest pleasure.

Though these observations might not be entirely new, said the Duke, that does not take off from the great utility of them; because they revive our attention to the means of conducting ourselves well, and we are much indebted to those who lay down rules on that subject, for they always leave an impression behind them, which is of greater use to us than many vain attainments which cost us so much pains in the acquisition; and we cannot sufficiently regret the time we misemploy in them, while we neglect to inform ourselves of the duties of life, to acquire a sense of our faults, and to attain

tain to the means of correcting them. But as the Grand Master has observed to us, that, in order to live well with all mankind, there were two grand points to be inquired into, our exterior manners, and our essential conduct; and as he has entertained us only upon the first, I beg that the Marchioness will use her influence to prevail on him, to explain to us in what this essential conduct principally consists, which renders us both agreeable and useful to society.

E. KNOW.

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CONVERSATION THE SECOND.

CHAP. I.

*Of our essential conduct; in what it consists.
 Of the love of order, and its effects. The
 effects of irregularity.*

OUR essential conduct which renders us worthy of the esteem and friendship of mankind, continued the Grand Master, consists in a conformity to order, in a demeanour always just, regular, beneficent, and true, in all the actions
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of our life. The love of order is the first of all these qualities, because it is the foundation of all the virtues essential to society. He who loves and observes it in his conduct, imitates the Divine Being, who has fix'd it invariably on all his works; and the order we see in them, is an infallible mark of the providence of a Being infinitely wise and good. A man regular in his conduct, fills up all the duties of his station in which the same providence has placed him. If it has destined him to the government of others, he applies himself to provide for their security and necessities, and to the means of causing them to live happily by the rules of justice and prudence, and in the observation of those laws to which he is the first to submit. He supports the weak against the oppression and violence of the powerful, and is regular in the performance of all his public engagements and private promises. If he is born the subject of a lawful Prince, he is ready to risk his life and fortune against the enemies of his Sovereign, whether foreign or do-

mestic; and his love of order will prevent his deviating from the allegiance he owes him. If he is born in a Republic, he has the same attachment to it, and fidelity in maintaining the form of government and laws which he finds established. He interests himself in the prosperity of the state in which God has given him birth, and in the happiness of his compatriots; and wishes and endeavours to maintain it to the utmost of his power. He wishes to see the troubles and disputes that set nations at variance, concluded by a spirit of peace and charity. He not only satisfies all the duties of civil society, but likewise those annexed to the profession he has made choice of, and the different circumstances of fortune in which he finds himself. He does not attempt to raise himself above his condition but by just and warrantable means, and when he is called forth by the public service, which he prefers to his own passions, interest and repose. Men who deviate from this rule, and who suffer themselves to be hurried away by immoderate ambition,

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become unavoidably guilty of many crimes, because they disturb the order of society, and the repose of the individuals who compose it, by employing unjustifiable means to raise themselves on the ruin of others.

Since love of order, and on the other hand irregularity, are the sources of so much good and evil, replied the Duke, I think it would be right to examine more particularly the effects which they produce in the ordinary commerce of life.

It is certain, replied the Grand Master, that we merit esteem in proportion to the regularity of our conduct. A regular man is in a capacity to lead a just, beneficent, and servicable life; to make himself useful and agreeable to those with whom he is conversant. A man irregular in his manners and mode of life, is deficient in point of justice, charity, and other duties of his station. He has not sufficient attention to a right disposition of his domestic affairs; they are ruined by his mismanagement and senseless expence; he becomes burthensome

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to his friends by borrowing, and at last gives himself up to the tyranny of extortioners, and sinks irretrievably.

There is, replied the Grand Master, a sort of irregularity very inconvenient and disagreeable in the ordinary course of life, and which is common amongst the young people of our time. The great attachment which they have to pleasure, throws them into a dissipation, which makes them deficient in the duties of friendship, and even those which politeness and good breeding have established amongst all people who understand life. They make appointments with their friends and those whose services they stand in need of, and break their engagements when the business of pleasure is in agitation. They either neglect to answer letters that are addressed to them, or give no answer to the point in question. They promise their services when ask'd, and never perform their promise; or, they put it off from day to day, without finding a single moment for the execution of it, till they have lost the opportunity. It is to be supposed that some
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of them have the inclination, but their indolence and continual dissipation produce the same effect as if they wanted good intentions. Men absolutely owe these mutual attentions to each other, this regard to the punctual performance of their promises, from the highest to the lowest ranks of life; because they cannot fail in that point, without breaking in on that regularity which is necessary to make their company useful or agreeable.

This puts me in mind, says the Duke, of a man about the Court so irregular in all the duties of this sort, that after having exceedingly press'd a person of consequence, whose service he had need of, to dine with him, went to dine with the first person that ask'd him, and thought no more of the guests he had invited, who neither found the master of the house, nor a dinner; yet as he was good company, and an agreeable man, one overlook'd these inattentions, and all his other irregularities in his own or other people's affairs.

He would have shewn none in mine, answered the Grand Master, for I should

have taken good care not to have trusted him with them. The safest way is never to depend upon persons of this character; and to make no other use of them than we would do of a monkey, whose frolicks may divert us.

This would be a great piece of wisdom, replied the Marchioness, if one could employ persons only in those matters they were fit for, and never expect more of any one than he is able to perform; but it is very difficult, when one sees certain beings in the human shape, who talk and reason like other men, not to give them credit for being fit for something, or to be employed to some purpose in the exigencies of life. Certain, however, it is, that there are abundance of these frivolous yet agreeable people, who having no rule in themselves, can observe none with regard to others.

The case seems to be, Madam, replied the Grand Master, that care has not been taken to inculcate to them duties of this kind, and the interest they have in fulfilling them. There are scarce any persons who would not endeavour to make themselves

themselves useful, if they were thoroughly persuaded that men are esteem'd by others just in proportion as they can be of some kind of service; that it is the most general rule by which they judge of their worth, their knowledge, their capacity, and all their good qualities; and that those persons, who are quite useless from their indolence or inattention, may be compared to the tree in the Scripture, that was to be rooted up because it did not bear fruit.

C H A P. II.

Of justice, and it's different species. Of the conquests that are just, and those that are unjust. Sentiments on the conquests of Cæsar and Alexander. The source of the false judgement of mankind relative to conquerors. In what consists the true glory of great men.

THIS negligence is the more blameable, continued the Grand Master, as men stand in need of society to relieve each other in all their necessities and infirmities; and in order to live agreeable

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and commodiously, must all conspire to the good of that society of which they are members, and of which they reap the fruits. It is for this reason, that every good citizen is obliged to contribute to the defence and security of the state, which establishes his own particular safety, and the repose of his life; and he ought to have a determined resolution to be serviceable to others when he has ability, without violating justice, which should regulate our conduct in regard to the services and favors we ought to grant to those who have recourse to us in their exigencies; for I think we should never fail of doing good when we have it in our power.

That is true, replied the Grand Master, when it is consistent with the laws of that justice by which it ought to be regulated. If we exercise it without regard to these rules, it is an usurp'd power, which renders the action unwarrantable, how good soever our intention in doing it might have been. I suppose, for instance, that I am solicited by my creditor to pay what I owe him, and by an
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an unfortunate person to relieve him in his distress ; if I am not able to satisfy both, I cannot relieve the distress'd person to the prejudice of my creditors ; because acts of justice should take place of those of charity, and it is necessary to pay our debts before we make our presents or bestow our alms ; but I ought to avoid contracting debts which deprive me of the means of doing acts of charity and liberality. He who does either without paying what he owes is guilty of a robbery, inasmuch as he disposes of the property of another against the rules of justice, the very essence of which consists in rendering to every man his due. When we have power and opportunity to do this, we shou'd be extremely cautious of being seduc'd by the favour of any man, or the considerations of friendship ; for the maxim of a certain king of antiquity is both false and dangerous, who found that his friends were always in the right. There is another species of justice in the distribution of benefits, which requires us always to bestow them on those who are esteem'd to be the most worthy of them,

them, most especially when a public employment is to be fill'd up ; for in this case, a man makes himself responsible for the miscarriage of those improper persons whom he appoints to them, and the ill effects they produce to the community, whether they proceed from want of principle or capacity. This choice becomes more or less important in proportion to the degree of authority annex'd to their employments, and the consequence of the affairs intrusted to them. Too much care therefore cannot be taken, that the command of armies, the management of the state, or foreign negotiations, be given to persons of the most distinguish'd abilities ; because the faults committed in these cases are often irretrievable, whilst those that are committed in the internal police by inferior magistrates, are rectified by the authority of the Prince or the Government there establish'd.

This observation, said the Lady, regards particularly the conduct of Princes, or those to whom they delegate authority ; but I should be glad to know how the
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Grand Master reconciles the glory of conquerors to that regularity and justice which he requires in the conduct of mankind.

It is an easy matter, replied the Grand Master, to satisfy you in that point. It has been one of the greatest errors of the vulgar to applaud all conquerors, without making so necessary a distinction as that between the conquests which are just and those which are otherwise. There are no men more worthy of honour than those great princes, or heroes, who, instead of passing their lives in indolence and pleasure, expose themselves to the fatigues and dangers of a necessary war, to procure, by their toils and victories, the security and happiness of their subjects or countrymen; but there are none who are more proper objects of universal abhorrence, than those public persecutors, who ruin their own country, or that of their neighbours, from the sole motive of gratifying vain glory or intemperate ambition.

Yet, replied the lady, Cæsar and Alexander would never have had the applause

plause and admiration bestow'd on them, if they had never been guilty of usurpation upon others.

Cæsar replied the Grand Master, was worthy of that applause, and of the admiration we have of his courage, the vast extent of his genius, as well as his other great qualities natural and acquir'd, while he was engaged in the Gallic War; because he executed the orders of his republic. But when he turn'd against her the arms she had entrusted him with, all his great qualities became pernicious, by the ill use which he made of them in violating the laws and every duty, and in compassing the destruction of so great a number of men, whom he sacrificed to his vanity and ambition.

And Alexander, replied the Lady; Had he reason or not for undertaking the conquest of the world?

The war which Alexander engaged in against the King of Persia, replied the Grand Master, was worthy of the greatness of his courage, to which he had a just motive, when the point in view was the ruin of a powerful enemy who had undertaken

undertaken the invasion of Greece, and the conquest of his neighbours; but, after Alexander had subdued the empire of Darius, his invasion of the Indians, Scythians and other barbarous people without necessity, with whom he had no quarrel, ought to be look'd upon as the effect of a vain, restless, and turbulent spirit.

Yet, replied the Lady, you will not alter the favourable opinion of the public in respect to those two conquerors, or prevent their ranking those who imitate them, tho' at a considerable distance, in the number of heroes.

I do not pretend, Madam, replied the Grand Master, to cure the public of all their errors, and especially those on this subject. They are too deeply rooted in the hearts of the generality of mankind. They are founded in the unwarrantable desires which they are possessed with, of subjecting others to their will. It is this circumstance that blinds them, in the wrong judgment which they form of the actions of those celebrated robbers, whom they so much admire under the title of conquerors.

conquerors. They applaud the acts of injustice and the cruelty of these counterfeit heroes, because they would readily commit the same if they had power to imitate them, and to sacrifice, like them, the happiness and repose of the public to their vanity, ambition, and avarice. It is for this cause that these injurious and insatiable men are, in the opinion of ignorant, depraved, and vulgar minds, superior to wise and good Princes who confine their endeavours and desires to the preservation of their own rights, and to procuring the happiness of the people whom just laws have subjected to their direction. These false opinions cause the greatest part of those men who are in authority, to apply themselves more closely to the encreasing of their power than to the regulation of their sentiments and desires; because men blinded by the same desires, respect them in proportion to their power, not in proportion to their worth. There is, however, no stronger mark of a depraved mind, and of the corruption of the human heart, than to make public calamities

mities the basis of its happiness and glory; in that respect men follow the worst propensity of human nature, which is for centering every thing in self; whereas self-love, properly directed, finds it's own satisfaction in contributing to that of others. This is a maxim which shou'd influence all men in power, if they wou'd chuse to shew themselves worthy of their employments, the institution of which could have no other end in view than the public good. The true glory of great men, therefore, does not consist in usurping by force or address an illegal authority, to gratify unjust and irregular desires, or to leave an empty name after their death; but in fulfilling all the duties of that power which they lawfully possess, in order to procure the happiness of those whom God has committed to their charge.

These truths appear so incontestable, replied the Marchioness, that I am resolv'd to abide by the sentiments of the Grand Master.

It were to be wish'd, replied the Duke, that all Princes felt their conviction;
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and that among the courtiers (who are incessantly telling them that every thing is their due, and all is made for them) there was some one of them honest and sincere enough to suggest to them how much they likewise owe to their subjects, and that they ought to use their unwearied endeavours for their happiness, and can acquire true glory only by such means; and that if a Prince is the image of God on earth by his power, he ought to be so likewise by his wisdom, justice, and goodness.

One could not have concluded the subject better, replied the Grand Master. It puts me in mind of a saying of one of the ancients, that if any thing made men resemble the Gods, it was doing good, and telling the truth.

C H A P. III.

Of a beneficent disposition and the virtues it gives birth to. In what consists true liberality. That the best privilege of Sovereigns consists in their power of doing good.

THERE is no surer method of gaining an ascendancy over the minds

minds of men, than that of conferring benefits. He who endeavours to make them happy, is sure to strengthen and extend his power, because their interest engages them to maintain it; but the power that is founded on fear, is neither solid nor permanent; for as fear is a mode of violence, men naturally seek the means of freeing themselves from it, and avail themselves of the favourable opportunities that offer for that purpose.

Since a benevolent disposition has such good effects, replied the Marchioness, I could wish that the Grand Master would explain to us in what it consists; and what is the true use of it, as well with regard to Princes as private persons.

A disposition to do good, replied the Grand Master, is an active virtue, which places the satisfaction of the person who is possess'd of it, in procuring the happiness of others; and we give it a different name according to the different effect it produces. It is called Magnificence, when it is exercised in expences that are useful and agreeable to the public; we call

call it Liberality, when it confers it's benefits on persons who are worthy of them; and it takes the titles of Magnanimity and Clemency, when it pardons injuries, and shews favor to the guilty, or a vanquished enemy. We call it Goodness when it shews compassion to the misfortunes and weaknesses of others, indulgence to their faults, and condescension to them, or compliance with their desires; and it has the appellation of Charity, when it's purpose is to relieve them in their afflictions and distresses.

There are scarce any but great Princes, said the Lady, that can be liberal and beneficent; and this noble quality cannot be reduced to the practice of private persons.

The true liberality, replied the Grand Master, may be practised by all men, because it does not consist so much in the value of benefits, as the sentiments of his heart who confers them; and a man may be avaritious in the very act of making great presents contrary to his inclination, and from considerations of interest, while another is truly liberal
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and beneficent, by the constant desire which he has of conferring, or procuring them for others, and the pleasure he takes in this business. Thus people may be beneficent in every rank of life, and it is in vain that a covetous man endeavours to excuse his hardness and avarice by his want of power, when liberality has it's true source in the heart, and the greatest fortune serves no purpose, commonly, but to inflame the desire of amassing money without end, to make a bad use of it, or none at all. A man possessed with this passion, becomes less estimable in proportion as it renders him useless to society. For the opposite reason, there are none who deserve higher commendation than those, who with unremitted endeavours apply themselves to the service of others, who make it their pleasure and predominant passion to give continual proof of this kind and beneficent disposition, and who lose no opportunity of contributing to the satisfaction or happiness of mankind.

The highest privilege of Sovereigns is, in my opinion (said the Duke) the power of
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of putting this noble inclination in daily practice; and I conceive that no one ever better felt the advantages of his situation, or better knew how to avail himself of it, than that Emperor who regretted the loss of a day which he had passed without doing good to any one, and who thought it unbecoming a Prince to suffer any person to go from his presence sad or dissatisfied. He was, therefore, honoured with the most glorious title that was ever given to Prince. Those that have relation to victories that a Prince has obtained, and the conquests he has made, are in a great measure due to chance; because, how great soever his courage or conduct might have been, he had need of the courage and number of his troops, and favourable opportunities, which are casual and adventitious things with regard to himself; but the quality of beneficence is entirely his own; he does not divide the honour of it with any one; this possession, and his becoming by it's means the delight of his people, depend wholly upon himself.

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The remarks we have just made relative to the Prince, continued the Grand Master, are applicable to all ranks of mankind. A man cannot have a great soul without beneficence, and making it his pleasure to exercise this noble quality in proportion to the extent of his power.

Yet, replied the Duke, those who retire from the commerce of the world to a contemplative life, seem to neglect the practice of this virtue, in order to attain to a higher degree of perfection.

CHAP. IV.

Whether the active is preferable to the contemplative life. Of sincerity and uprightness of heart. Portraits of false people. Of falseness of our judgement, which is different from that of the heart.

THE contemplative life which has God alone for its object, is praiseworthy, replied the Grand Master; but the active life, animated by the love of God and our neighbour, appears to me still more so, inasmuch as it entirely fulfils the commandment, which says,
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Thou shalt love thy God with all thy power, and thy neighbour as thyself. The man who loves his neighbour, ought to endeavour to be useful to him. Those persons, therefore, who have talents proper for the service of their Prince, their country, and indeed of mankind without distinction of country, since charity does not exclude any, are obliged to exercise those talents when called upon, in executing, with disinterested zeal and application, the employments that are entrusted to them. The repose and independence, to which those who decline them give the preference, are often the effects of an indolent disposition, or a habit they have acquired of wearing away their life in a listless inactivity, which is rendered, by the very want of employment, often restless and subject to spleen. It is true, continued the Grand Master, that one commonly finds more sincerity in a man retired from the converse of the world, than in those persons who are engaged in it; because of the necessity of screening themselves from the artifices and malice
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of other men, and because the bad examples which they often find amongst them, corrupt this good quality: yet sincerity and a right heart are essential to human perfection.

I am convinc'd of it, replied the Marchioness, and that there is not a worse character than those false people who pass their lives in constantly speaking against their true sentiments, and appearing the reverse of what they really are. I would prefer the company of a man rough and unbred, who would tell me his real sentiments, to the company of those men of art and duplicity, who, under a false gloss of zeal, esteem, and friendship, conceal a heart full of envy, hardness, and malignity; who do not cultivate us for any opinion they have of our good qualities, but in proportion as they believe us adapted to their views and purposes; who regulate their attentions, their civilities, and their respect, by the degree which they suppose we have of the favor and confidence of those who can be serviceable to them; and who cease to see or know us, in propor-

tion as our credit declines, or their own advances. These are the persons who accost us with a most gracious air, and speak to us in a soften'd tone; who are constantly saying soothing and flattering things, and scarce are we out of their sight, but they seek every occasion of turning our good actions and qualities into ridicule, or in holding up all our foibles to observation, and aggravating them by the overcharg'd pictures which they draw.

This behaviour, replied the Duke, is very common: it is a practice we often have occasion to observe in those with whom we are conversant.

It is very true, replied the Marchioness, but the frequency of it does not make it less contemptible; and we cannot be too much on our guard with certain groveling and malignant spirits, who come to make us an overture of false confidence in order to surprize ours, and avail themselves of it by the traffic which they make of all the secrets of others; who are always ready to sacrifice us, and to envenom the most innocent conversation,

tion, when they suppose that they can enhance their own consequence by it. These are the false friends who make us a thousand tenders of services, and who can most patiently hear us traduced without an attempt to justify or defend us; and who, on occasions that may offer of serving us, either have not power or inclination to give us advantageous proofs of it that would do them credit. These are the bravoës who stun us with false details of their exploits, who have been the cause of every victory gained by the late King, and who are yet generally very anxious about the safety of those precious persons that they believe to be of so much consequence to the state. But more unsufferable still are those false devotees who make a trade of the exercise and externals of affected piety to advance their fortune, or to spread with impunity their venom against those who do not respect their grimace, and who see in the bottom of their hearts the sordid interest, perverted pride, and immoderate ambition with which they are tortured.

These Madam, replied the Grand Master, are portraits which seem to be drawn from the life.

The originals of them are so common, replied the Marchioness, that the same portrait may be applied to a great many different persons; and they in consequence take refuge amongst the crowd, which prevents their being distinguished from their resemblances. But to return to what you were saying of sincerity, and of a right heart, which are, in my opinion, qualities so amiable, that I must beg you to teach me to understand them in their whole extent.

You have yourself expatiated, Madam, so largely on the defects which are their opposites, replied the Grand Master, that one cannot give you any information on that head; since we have nothing to do but to act in a manner just the reverse of what you have been describing, to observe that true conduct and uprightness of heart which is so highly estimable for its own worth, and which becomes more so for its rarity. If mankind however knew their true interest, they would endeavour

deavour more than they do to preserve it, or to acquire it when they are deficient in that point; for it is the want of this quality which is the principal cause of the dissensions prevailing amongst them, and which deprives them of so many real and solid pleasures that they would find in harmony, mutual confidence, and esteem. There are none who are not sensible of the excellence of this quality; and they bear continual testimony to the esteem they have for it, by the pains they take to persuade people that they are possess'd of it. But there are very few who have the resolution to acquire it, and who do not content themselves with exhibiting all its externals. They pass their lives under a masque and constraint; without reflecting that it would be easier and more agreeable to them to become what they wish'd to be esteem'd; and that there is nothing more difficult than for ever to deceive those who observe them. They may be able to impose upon them for some time; but the sequel of their behaviour, however concerted it may be, discovers what they really are; and from

the moment they are known, the falſe-
neſs and duplicity of their heart deſerv-
edly ſubject them to contempt and ab-
horrence.

All this is true, replied the Lady ; but
diſguiſe is become a neceſſary evil, by rea-
ſon of the general corruption that pre-
vails amongſt mankind. If a man had
always his heart on his lips amidſt ſuch a
crowd of impoſtors and faithleſs perſons
of all ranks as live in this world, he
would ſoon be undone by their villainy
and artifice.

This obſervation is in my opinion very
juſt, replied the Grand Maſter, and it
merits conſideration. When we ſay that
we ought to have integrity in our conduct
and truth in our hearts, it does not follow
that we ſhould tell all the truth we know,
or all we think of another ; this would
be a piece of ſimplicity and indiſcretion
exceedingly blameable, and would cauſe
everlaſting confuſion in ſociety. The
point of truth to be obſerved in our con-
duct, is, not to exhibit a contradiction to
our ſentiments, with a view to miſlead
mankind, and to abuſe their credulity ;
but

but especially never to make them a positive promise that we have no intention to perform.

Yet, replied the Lady, if any person of consequence, whom you might stand in need of, should entreat you to do him a piece of service which depended upon you, and there were good reasons against it, Would you tell him plainly that you would have nothing to do with the affair, and incur his resentment.

If I could render him the service he desir'd of me, replied the Grand Master, I would do it with pleasure; but if it was of such a nature that the request ought not to be granted, I would tell him politely my reasons for a refusal; and if this person, how considerable soever he might be, was not satisfied therewith, I would draw consolation from myself, and would not amuse him with false appearances and promises; for, exclusive of their being unworthy of a heart rightly disposed, we should conclude that people would be less piqued at a refusal than a breach of your word; and that nothing would raise their resentment so much as falsehood.

I am much of your opinion, said the Duke; but I am of opinion, that a false judgment is not the cause of less disorder in society than a false heart.

That is true, replied the Grand Master; but there is this difference, that the latter is a defect of the intellects, which is a matter that does not depend on ourselves; and duplicity is a voluntary defect, as we have power to correct it.

But may we not, said the Marchioness, correct defects of the mind, and improve our natural parts.

That is practicable, replied the Grand Master; but success depends upon a good deal of pains and application.

The possibility of it, replied the Marchioness, is a sufficient inducement not to neglect so great an advantage; but in order to be in a capacity of acquiring it, I beg the Grand Master to inform me, in what the defects and excellencies of the mind consist.

C H A P.

C H A P. V.

Of the qualities of the mind natural and acquired.

THE qualities of the mind, replied the Grand Master, are natural or acquired; the first depend upon the disposition of the organs and the temperament; the latter on education, study, and experience. The natural faculties of the mind are commonly distinguished into the imagination, understanding, and memory. The excellence of the imagination consists in a lively, clear, and easy conception of the things that present themselves to it, and in exhibiting just and distinct ideas of them to the understanding. The good qualities of the understanding consist in forming a right judgement of these ideas, and distinguishing the true from the false. That of the memory consists in preserving faithfully the ideas it is furnish'd with. As the perfection of these three different faculties of our soul, is commonly produced by a different temperament, they

are seldom found to the same degree in any one person. Men born with a lively imagination are calculated to excel in the arts, as music, painting, sculpture, geometry, and the mechanicks: they make discoveries in them that are useful and entertaining to the public, and they likewise succeed and become eminent in poetry and oratory; but they are not so well qualified for the affairs and government of a state. They ought only to be employed in secondary departments, and it would be dangerous and detrimental to entrust them with the principal employments; because the vivacity of imagination is repugnant to that turn for reflection which weighs at leisure every thing that offers, before it comes to a determination; which is the character most conducive to our own good conduct, and to our conducting others well. The vivacity and scope of the imagination are then particularly calculated to form what is called a fine genius, which dazzles mankind, which entertains or instructs by its happy and pleasing productions. But it is the clearness, and the
justness

justness of the understanding, that constitute a well-formed, judicious and solid mind, which is serviceable to itself and others by its great abilities in the affairs in which it is employed. It is the excellence of the memory in conjunction with great application, which forms men of letters, and persons well versed in languages and history, and other attainments which make them agreeable and useful in society on many occasions, on which recourse is had to them for information as to facts, laws, and other curious matters which are of service in the conduct of life. As a just discernment is the most important and necessary of all the qualities of the mind, it is that which we ought to cultivate with the greatest care, and which ought to be the principal object of our application. When we have a sound judgement of things, we naturally attach ourselves to what is right, and avoid what is wrong; and it is the want of good judgement that is the cause of all the mistakes in our conduct. Nothing is more highly to be esteemed, or more rare among mankind,

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mankind, than a sound judgement and right sense of things. There is nothing more common than men whose minds, with a sort of spurious vivacity, form a wrong judgement of every thing, deciding rashly on what they do not understand, and particularly on those things which are above the reach of the greatest part of mankind; who are vehement in their opinions, never keeping themselves in a just temperature; who generally take the wrong step in their own affairs, as well as those with which they are charged; who would fain draw others into their errors, and challenge their approbation; who are so bigotted to their own warped sense of things, that they are incapable of attending to any thing that may undeceive them. It is this which has given birth and support to numberless errors which are current amongst mankind, and which many persons make their principal study. We might add to this class, those who have had reveries of judicial astrology in their heads; and who have puff'd away their whole lives in seeking what they call the
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Grand Work, or the Philosophers Stone*; as well as many other wrongheads who most intrepidly spread their visions, and who find men sufficiently ignorant and open to imposition to be led into their errors; so that there were never any broached so absurd and extravagant, that had not their set of votaries. From the same source have flowed heresies, and the dreadful wars which they have caused, to establish or maintain the opinion of some visionary. It is from this want of true discernment, that so many windy projects proceed, so many mad enterprises equally unjust and ill concerted.

All this is very well observed, replied the Lady; but I do not see the means of remedying those evils which are as old as the world, and which will last as long as the race of mankind; for this would be attempting to make the blind clear-sighted, and to give judgement to those who have it not.

Yet, Madam, replied the Grand Master, as a wrong judgement often pro-

* This remark of the author was more seasonable at the time it was made, when those chimeras were not so thoroughly exploded as at present.

ceeds from precipitation, we may correct ourselves in this point, by accustoming ourselves not to form a judgement of any thing without consulting most seriously our own understandings, as well as those of our friends which are less prejudiced, and more enlightened in those matters that regard ourselves.

It is my opinion, said the Marchioness, that the greatest part of wrong judgements proceed from the presumption of those who make them. There are some who carry it to so high a pitch, that they will not be persuaded that one can teach them any thing; these are so far from consulting the understanding of others, that they are not capable of making use of their own.

These people so confident in themselves, and so conceited of their own knowledge and abilities, said the Grand Master, are apt to commit egregious blunders: they put me in mind of an old maxim of one of our Kings *, who said, That when pride and ignorance mounted on horseback, shame and misfortune were behind on the crupper.

* Lewis the 11th, in his Life by Philip Comines.

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I am acquainted with a person, replied the Duke, who falls into the opposite fault, which is, to doubt of every thing, and who piques himself on the vain credit of his scepticism.

C H A P. VI.

Whether the sciences contribute to the perfection of the mind. Of the good and ill effects which they produce. That there are points of knowledge founded on demonstration.

I BEG the Grand Master, replied the Marchioness, to inform me, whether the attainment of the sciences contributes to a clear judgment.

The sciences, answered the Grand Master, are calculated to perfect a mind of a right cast, and to give it additional wisdom, skill, and humility; but they throw a deal of confusion and disorder into wrong heads. These are puffed up, by swelling out in their own imaginations, the opinion they have of their own merit. Young men particularly, whom the want of experience and the heat of their own tem-

temperament dispose to become self-presuming, are apt to grow conceited of what they have learnt. The half-scholars likewise are commonly self-sufficient and presumptuous; they easily become conceited of the first rays of science that strike them, especially of the abstract and speculative kind, as metaphysics and the mathematics. They take probabilities for certain truth and demonstration; and they believe that they have a right to esteem themselves superior geniuses, and to rank themselves much above those who do not understand what they fancy they themselves do: when we examine closely their pretended science, it is found that they know nothing, or, at most, things that are useless, uncertain, or even prejudicial, as they draw them off from learning what they ought to know; and because, instead of contributing to regulate their minds, they fill them with vain ideas, and a false opinion of themselves, which are a fruitful source of errors and misconduct.

We should, however, replied the Grand Master, be cautious of attributing to the sciences

sciences the bad effects that they produce in those who make a bad use of them. They are a sharp sword in the hands of a madman who turns it upon himself, and which serves a wise man for a defence against his enemies. Metaphysicks conduct us to the Author of all beings, by the immense greatness and profound wisdom which we see in all his works; but in improving our natural endowments, they discover to us their narrow limits, and the vanity of what we call Science. This discovery serves to convince us, that the only true wisdom is, to submit our weak abilities, and our whole will, to the providence of that Sovereign and eternal Being, and to constantly humble and as it were annihilate ourselves before him. The mathematicks, (and especially that branch which is called Geometry,) regulate the understanding, and make us reason justly; and it is on this account that the ancient Greeks taught them their children before any other science; for as we scarce know any thing with certainty but what can be reckoned or measured, they made numbers, and the extent of
bodies,

bodies the basis of their reasoning, because the truth of these matters is demonstrable.

I beg the Grand Master, with the permission of the Ladies, to give me some examples of those truths, in order by their means to convince the person I lately spoke of; who insists upon it, that there is no certain knowledge in this world.

He cannot deny, replied the Grand Master, that two and two make four; that how great soever a number may be, it may be increased to infinity by addition of other numbers; that whatever has two ends has a middle, and is divisible into different parts; that each part is less than the whole of which it is a portion. There are, therefore, some self-evident truths, by which we can regulate our judgment, in order to acquire that accuracy which is necessary.

C H A P. VII.

How well formed minds judge of every thing that is offered to them. What sort of knowledge is the most conducive to a right conduct.

WELL formed minds, continued the Grand Master, examine things with attention, in order to judge of them with skill, and to put each of them in the rank they ought to hold. They assent to those that are evidently true, or that are capable of demonstration; they reject those that are false; and suspend their judgment on those which appear to be uncertain, and to the truth of which they are not able to penetrate; and one of the greatest proofs that they can give of their capacity is, to be diffident of it, by the conviction which they have of its confined limits; and to be always disposed to improve it, by the assistance which they may draw from the experience and abilities of others.

I could wish, replied the Marchioness, that the Grand Master would tell us precisely

cisely what is the science which he judges most essential to good conduct.

It is my opinion, Madam, replied the Grand Master, that after our endeavours to inform ourselves of those truths, the knowledge of which are necessary to our salvation, the knowledge of ourselves holds the second rank. For the attainment of this, we should examine with care the reach of our own parts, in order to confine our studies and knowledge to just limits; for when we endeavour to stretch them beyond that scope, we are thrown into visionary scenes, in which we never fail to bewilder ourselves. We should likewise apply ourselves to a discovery of the good and bad inclinations with which we were born, and we should earnestly labour to strengthen the good and correct the bad; regarding them as dangerous domestic enemies, always ready to betray us. We should use our utmost application to know men as they really are, not as they endeavour to appear, and particularly those with whom we are to have any intercourse; in order to regulate our conduct in respect to them, upon the knowledge

ledge we may have acquired of their opinions, prejudices, virtues and vices. We should endeavour moreover to acquire those arts and sciences, and that knowledge which is suitable to our condition, and the character in which we purpose to appear in the world. In order to make a good choice, we should examine the qualities both of our minds and bodies, and the dispositions which we have received from nature, in order to accommodate our choice to them; because we generally succeed in things we undertake with pleasure, and to excel in our pursuits in life is a sure means of becoming useful to ourselves, and of distinction amongst those who are on the level of our rank. It would be right, continued the Grand Master, while we were compleating ourselves in those attainments that ought to constitute our principal objects in view, to endeavour to acquire a general idea of others, that we may not be obliged to discover a gross ignorance in certain points of knowledge which are of use in all professions; but our application to them should be according to their rank, and

and in degrees proportioned to their utility. We should always prefer those that are the most necessary in the commerce of life, to those that have no other point in view than to gratify an idle curiosity, or to contribute to luxury or pleasure; because a man is valuable not only on the score of excelling in what he attempts, but also in proportion to the value of those things to which he gives his chief attention, and makes the principal object of his pursuit. Though perhaps as much time and application may be required to make an excellent Painter, Poet, or Musician, as to form a great General, an able Minister, or a wise Magistrate; the latter are more esteemed than the former, on account of the superiority of the object which they proposed to themselves. We should likewise avoid a fault, which is common enough among mankind, that of stepping out of their own proper character, and affecting to know things which it is by no means necessary that they should understand, and who do not accommodate themselves to the profession of which they have made choice. This may

may be instanced in the ridiculous folly of an Ecclesiastic, when he affects to make a parade of his skill in matters relative to the military art, in which he can never be employed; who takes upon him to decide upon points, and lay down rules in it, instead of piquing himself on excelling in things which it is his duty to know. There are likewise some accomplishments which are not suitable to men in certain high stations. There are, for instance, arts which may contribute to their amusement; but they ought not to employ part of their lives to acquire an excellence in them, because that would destroy the time which they should bestow on attainments necessary to their duties and stations.

This recalls to my mind a bon mot * of a Musician to Philip King of Macedon, who had a dispute with him about the beauty of an air. The Gods forbid, said the Musician, (begging the King's pardon) that you should understand that matter better than me. It likewise reminds me of another of the same King to his son Alexander, who had sung an

* Related by Plutarch in his Apophthegms,

air in a masterly manner before him. Are not you ashamed, said Philip, to sing so well? These bons mots are a lesson to Princes and persons in an exalted station, to teach them not to regard these arts, but as agreeable amusements to unbend their minds after their other employments, but most especially, never to suffer them to become their regular business or predominant passion.

C H A P. VIII.

Of the different qualities of the mind caused by the difference of temperament. Of qualities which the mind may acquire by education. Of the force of first impressions.

THE Grand Master, replied the Duke, has, I think, told us, that the good and bad qualities of the mind depend often on the temperament with which we are born.

That is true, replied the Grand Master; the greatest part of mankind act more from humour than reason. Men of a temperament warm and bilious, are commonly impatient, quarrelsome, harsh, and uncompanionable; those who are cooler in that respect, are in general more tract-

tractable, gentle, and patient. Mild spirits are agreeable in society, and conciliate affection by voluntary deference to others; and mankind are fond of those who are pliable to their inclinations; but this easy nature is often carried to a weakness. Men of this cast suffer themselves to be led into engagements that are blameable, and of which they have cause to repent. There are young men, who being born with a soft easy temper, a sort of natural complaisance, fall into debauchery and many other irregularities into which their own disposition would not have led them, and who have not strength of mind enough to resist opportunity, bad example, and the solicitations of those who seduce them. Warm constitutions in general have strong passions, and require submission to their opinions; but they have their intervals and returns of weakness and irresolution, and may be led as well as others when they are known, and one is apprised of the course to be taken with them. There are some whimsical and eccentric spirits that are very difficult to manage, and are very disagreeable company, as one

cannot take any regular measures with them. Their humours sometimes are quite in a tempest, and those who are near them must be pilots, with the compass always in hand, to observe the different alterations which happen in them. It is a difficult matter for those who are under the dominion of this capricious and impetuous temper, to recover a serenity; it is a sort of fever that seizes them by fits; they have occasion of frequent reflection, and prudent, patient, and sincere friends, to check their sallies, and prevent their ill effects. There are some minds naturally hard, inflexible, and perverse, which are ill adapted to the management of affairs. There is need of great address to turn them by their easiest bias, and to smooth the difficulties of this attempt, instead of creating greater by rough humours, and a spirit of contradiction, which never fail of irritating and disgusting those to whom they are shewn. We should make them sensible of their own interest by the most agreeable methods, appearing to comply with their opinion in things that are not essentially repugnant to the point to which we have
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a design of conducting them: this imperceptibly engages them in an equal condescension in other matters which are sometimes of greater importance. There are restless spirits that cannot endure themselves, that carry every where the disquiet by which they themselves are agitated, without being able to discover the reason of it. Minds of this cast should be engaged in business, or in the study of the sciences, to correct this defect of the temperament. They resemble the natural heat of the body, which acts against its substance, when we do not give it aliment. There are men whose minds are naturally irresolute, who cannot determine upon any thing, and who pass their whole lives in deliberation. This defect does not, generally speaking, proceed from want of sense. Their understandings discover to them many inconveniencies in all the expedients that present themselves, and their will is not strong enough to make choice of either of them. Minds of this cast, which are numerous, require a faithful friend, who has a determined spirit, to decide for them;

them; for there is scarce any circumstance so disagreeable, as that of suspense; or any resolution worse, than that of taking none at all.

This is very well remarked, replied the Lady; but I expect the Grand Master's sentiments upon those qualities and abilities which he spoke of, and which the mind may acquire by education, study, and experience. For my part, I am persuaded, that people retain, even to their death, the defects they were born with; and that nothing is more useless, than the pains taken to correct them. I see, even daily, that their constitutional defects, instead of diminishing, increase with age and experience.

This does not prevent education, replied the Grand Master, from having almost as much influence as native inclination. We see every day instances of the first impressions which we have received in our infancy, and which remain with us commonly to the end of our lives, especially those that regard religious opinions well or ill founded. We may easily judge of this matter by the
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great difficulty of recalling those to the truth who have fallen into heresy, and by the obstinacy with which they are attached to it, even to their renouncing fortune, country, family and friends, rather than they will be reclaimed. It is the same case with regard to other prejudices which men receive in early years. There is nothing therefore more important in society than an especial care of the Education of Children, and of giving them just ideas of those truths, the knowledge of which are requisite to a right conduct of life; and as none are so important as those that regard our salvation, it is necessary not only to instruct them in the grounds of these truths, but likewise to prevent their having any familiarity with those false and libertine spirits, who assume a preposterous honour from doubting of every thing, and who are accustomed to make the most important and respectable truths the subjects of their pleasantries. They are to be looked upon as public poisoners, especially those who approach young Princes destined to the government of others,

others, when they corrupt their hearts by their sophistry and bad example, and cause their minds to fluctuate in the most dangerous and ill-grounded doubts.

But can you convince us, replied the Lady, that we can set a wrong head right by a good education, and by the study of the sciences; since we think right or wrong according to the nature of our organs and disposition, as you yourself acknowledged.

C H A P. IX.

That men are born with dispositions to certain virtues and certain vices; and that they are diminished or strengthened by habit.

IT is true, replied the Grand Master, that the soul, though born free and immortal, is so closely tied to our senses, that its endowments are more or less distinct, according to the good or bad disposition of the organs of the body which it animates, by the bad state of which its functions are sometimes suspended, whether this proceeds from a disorder in the arrangement of its different faculties, as in the case of madness,

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or in a raging fit of the fever, or intoxication; but it does not follow from hence that (these extraordinary accidents excepted) the soul is irresistibly dragg'd by the disposition of the bodily machine *. It is certain that our passions have great power over the mind, and often seduce it to wrong measures; but if we sincerely examine ourselves without prejudice, or without complaisance to our passions and foibles, we shall see clearly that this Being, which thinks and reasons, deliberates and resolves, can act independently of the machine of the body; and that it is in its power to conduct it where it pleases, in the same manner as a good

* It is observed of the human faculties, by those who have investigated this curious subject, that any specific difference of the nature, quality, or degree of them, cannot be discerned by any sensible appearance in the organs. Some imagine that an essential diversity or gradation of the human soul, is less difficult to conceive. However this be, certain it is, that though the frame and texture of the organ may not originally constitute the difference between man and man, yet its comparative state, at different times, constitutes the energy of the same faculties in individuals, in whatever state of cultivation. The seeds of our passions, however, are more in the blood and spirits. These may lead us into a frequency of unheeded circumstances in earliest infancy, which by habit confirm and distinguish the predominant passions, nourishing those seeds from which we at first had their rise and propensity to repetition of them. These circumstances, therefore, may be considered as secondary causes of that predominancy.

pilot steers his vessel in despite of an agitated sea, and the resistance of contrary winds. The man who neglects to avail himself of this power of the mind over the movements of the body, resembles a pilot, who abandons the helm, and suffers his vessel to drive, at the mercy of the winds, against the rocks it may meet with in its course. I suppose a man then who is not a fool or stupid; I do not require a superior Genius, but that he be born with common sense, and capable of knowing the necessity there is of regulating our passions. If his attention to restrain the emotions of choler and impatience, which a violent temper excites in him, be equal to his application in learning to speak, sing, dance, or ride the managed horse, there is no doubt but he would become master of this passion, and all the other fallies into which he found himself carried by his natural disposition, or by bad habit; and it is very surprizing to see so great a number of men perfecting themselves in arts and bodily exercises, and things even of less use, and that there are so very few who employ themselves
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in regulating the emotions of the heart, or the operations of the mind, on which depend their good and bad qualities, and all the trouble or repose of their lives.

For my part, replied the Lady, I am persuaded that men are born virtuous or vicious.

They are born, Madam, replied the Grand Master, with dispositions to certain virtues and certain vices, but it is habit that strengthens or corrects their good or bad inclinations; and it is for this reason that the virtues are called Habits of the Soul, by which she is accustomed to think and act aright. They do not destroy our passions, but teach us to conduct them well; and, in fact, consist in the good use we make of them.

C H A P. X.

Instances of the effect of discipline and habit on brutes. That men are not less tractable; and that there is no virtue which they may not acquire.

THERE is not a foible which may not be corrected by resolute application.

cation. The irrational brutes shew us what effect discipline has upon them. The instinct of dogs carries them impetuously in pursuit of their game; and yet one can teach a dog to stand, at the scent of a partridge. We bring the most unruly horse to suffer himself to be mounted. They are broke for the manege, for war, and other exercises very difficult to learn. It is possible to tame and teach lions, bears, and the most ferocious beasts, and to give courage to the most timid. Men are not less docile than the brutes. They are all born with a fear of death and pain. There is no difference amongst them in this respect, but in the degree. There never were men so bold, as not to feel any emotion the first time they were in an engagement; yet, as they are convinced of the necessity of overcoming it, a great number are found, who have sufficient command of themselves to expose their persons to all the dangers and fatigues of war. Courage then is a virtue to be acquired; and for a proof that it depends on education and discipline as well as temper-

temperament, we have only to reflect that the Greeks and Romans were the bravest and most warlike of all nations, and the most celebrated for their battles and victories, and that their posterity have not inherited this high courage of their ancestors; which we must attribute to want of exercise and discipline, as nature does not differ from herself in her productions. The difference of times cannot effect all this, in regard to men whom she has produced under the same climate. I will cite you another instance which proves, beyond contradiction, that courage is acquired by habit and discipline: In order to form a judgement of this matter, we have only to remark the difference that there is between regular troops accustomed to engagements, and those newly raised. The latter scarce ever stand, yet they are commonly both composed of the same nation, and often of the same district; and when militia, so apt to run away, have made some campaigns, they acquire the same courage as the veteran troops whose example they follow. If discipline then can enable

ble men to acquire a virtue so difficult as that which excites them to expose themselves to pain and death, which are the two things of which nature has impressed the greatest horror on them; there are no other virtues which the same discipline cannot enable them to acquire with greater ease, when they are willing to apply themselves seriously to it.

This carries conviction with it, says the Duke; but since it is possible to subdue our passions and foibles, I beg that the Grand Master would inform us of the most proper means to produce this effect.

C H A P. - XI.

That there are two methods which men make use of to resist their passions and foibles. That it is the last of these methods that gives birth to all the virtues that depend on our will.

THERE are two very different methods which men make use of to combat their passions and foibles. That which is most in use with them is,
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the opposition of one passion to another; as, when the fear of death hurries them into flight from circumstances of danger in which their duty engages them, they call to their aid the shame which they have annexed to such flight, and the fear of disgrace; which two latter passions have force enough to subdue the former. It sometimes happens that there is a conflict between them, which throws the mind into a violent agitation. It is the same case with regard to other passions. The natural propensity which most men have to different sorts of pleasure and amusement, is check'd by the love of honor and riches; and the desire they are possessed with of acquiring them, excites an application to labour in despite of inclination. It is observable likewise, that the greatest part of mankind have some favorite passion to which the others are subordinate; thus the ambitious man often sacrifices his health, his repose, his pleasures, and all that is dear to him, to the ardent desire which he has of advancement in life. The second method which men employ for
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the purpose of getting rid of their foibles is, the assistance they draw from the mere strength of reason, which determines upon a sure and sound judgment, and on a distinct and certain knowledge of what is good or bad; and from this determination are derived all the virtues that depend upon the will.

Is there any virtue, replied the Duke, that is not subject to our will?

C H A P. XII.

That prudence is a virtue of the understanding; and its different functions. A rule to judge, whether the choice we make of our actions be good or bad.

PRUDENCE, replied the Grand Master, is an intellectual virtue, which has three principal faculties; knowledge, foresight, and skill in acting. Knowledge is employed in distinguishing truth from error, falsehood, and disguise; in comprehending good and evil in all their degrees and circumstances; in distinguishing things that are reputable from those that are otherwise; and in discerning

discerning the different kinds of folly and impertinence into which people are liable to fall. Its foresight is employed in penetrating into futurity, and in judging of the effects which the causes that are known to him must produce; and his activity is employed in avoiding the evils which he foresees, and in well conducting his designs in order to attain to the end which he proposed to himself.

These three faculties which you attribute to prudence, replied the Lady, do not they depend on the good disposition of our organs?

Without doubt, replied the Grand Master; but they depend likewise much on our own experience, and the reflection we make on the experience of others. This is so true, that of two men born with the same disposition to prudence, he who is grown old in the management of affairs, will be infinitely superior to the man of no application. He will surpass him in knowledge, foresight, and right conduct. Men advanced in years have much more prudence than young men; because they have made reflections
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on the different events that have occurred to them, and because their experience teaches them how to avoid the misfortunes with which they are threatened. Age likewise cools in them those passions which draw young men into a wrong choice.

Is there no rule to be found, replied the Duke, which can enable us to judge with certainty whether the choice we make in the common actions of life be good or bad?

It is my opinion, replied the Grand Master, that one of the surest means of arriving at this knowledge is, to consult ourselves, for the purpose of learning of ourselves what those things are which only give us pleasure in the moment of action; and what are of that sort, the pleasures of which survive them a long time. When we have distinguished all our actions into these two different classes, there will be no difficulty in concluding, that the set which afford us lasting enjoyment are infinitely superior to the other, from which that only results which is momentary. We shall be convinced then,

then, that our senses afford us transient gratifications, but the practice of virtue the permanent ones, by the satisfaction we feel in the practice of it from the applause and esteem which it draws from other men, and from the great rewards which it ensures to us in eternity. To come to the application of this maxim; let us contemplate a man who has passed his life in the frivolous occupations of play, public amusements, and different modes of dissipation. What are all the fruits that remain to him of these things? A just remorse at having so ill spent that time which he might have employed to so many noble purposes. Let us on the other hand contemplate a man who unceasingly applies himself to fill up all his duties, and to the exercise of the highest christian and moral virtues; charitable, modest, humble, just, patient, generous, mild, civil and polite; who has distinguished himself in his profession, if it be that of Arms, by great instances of courage and good conduct; if it be in the Magistracy, by an unblemished integrity, with which he has supported

ported the rights of the weak against the interest and oppression of the powerful; if he be an Ecclesiastic, by his humility and modesty, by his zeal and charity for his neighbour, who has distributed to the poor the alms of the Church, which are their true patrimony, who has comforted them in their afflictions, who has corrected and instructed the rich and powerful as well as the poor and weak, by his discourses and example. It is not at all difficult to conceive which state, of persons who have run so different a career of life, is attended with the highest satisfaction. Let us consider more minutely that set of sensualists, whose sole business of life is to try different pleasures; who are in constant pursuit of them, and who invent new modes of dissipation. Some refine upon the newness or richness of dress, furniture, and equipage; others upon delicious dishes and liquors, irritating their palates and appetites by whimsical and unwholesome ragouts. Others are devoted to idle curiosity, and to whatever luxury and effeminacy have invented for the torment of weak

weak mortals, and in short, to gratify all the desires of a depraved imagination. Let us on the other hand contemplate those who have led a life of frugal simplicity; who have placed their pleasure in the relief of those worthy families in distress who have come to their knowledge; who have paid the debts of other unfortunate persons in hard durance for no other crime than their inability in that respect; who have cloathed and fed a number of poor in time of scarcity; who seeing their debtors in distress, have freely remitted their debts to them, and furnished them with the means of re-establishing themselves, and of supporting their families. We shall certainly be convinced that the former enjoyed only short and transient pleasures, mixed with, and followed by disgust and bitter reflection, leading a restless life, busily idle; and that the latter have found in their good works a solid and durable satisfaction, and that internal peace, which is the inseparable companion of the good man, and the recompence of good actions in this life. There follows then an easy
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conclusion, that the pleasures of sense are inferior to those which accrue from the practice of virtue; since experience teaches us, that intellectual pleasures alone are lasting, and capable of making us truly happy.

I taste the sweets of intellectual pleasures, said the Marchioness, in hearing the Grand Master reason on the subject; but he will give me leave to ask, whether prudence, the good effects of which he has so well explained to us, does not often oblige us to dissemble our real sentiments? and, whether dissimulation, which reigns so much through the world, be a virtue or a vice?

C H A P. XIII.

Of dissimulation; whether it be a virtue or a vice. In what true ability consists. Example of a wise and able minister. Qualities requisite in an able minister.

IT is my opinion, replied the Grand Master, that there are two sorts; the one vicious, which has no other end in view but deceit; the other prudent and
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necessary, when the purpose is to conceal certain truths from those who would make a bad use of them, or to conceal from our enemies the schemes we have formed to protect ourselves from their insults and injuries. The principal maxim of one of our Kings, who was esteemed a great politician, and who left it as a rule of conduct to his son, was, That he who knows not how to dissemble, does not know how to reign. Dissimulation is necessary in a certain degree to men in authority, provided they know how to make a proper use of it. It is requisite for them to acquire an absolute command of themselves, and of the expressions of the physiognomy, as well as over their minds and humours, to prevent a discovery of the resolutions which they have taken for the good of the state, by those who incessantly observe them.

But if these resolutions are just, why must they be concealed, said the Lady, with so much care.

Because, replied the Grand Master, the most just designs may be traversed as well

well as the most unwarrantable, when discovered. The cause of this is, that mankind conduct themselves generally more by reasons of interest than rules of justice. How just soever, therefore, any measure may be, it is sufficient only that any person should believe himself to be interested in defeating the effect of it, to make him oppose it, which renders secrecy absolutely necessary to the execution of great designs; and whoever has not the art of concealing them is incapable of governing, whatever great qualities or whatever ability he may have in other respects. But if he dissembles for bad ends, and for the purpose of gratifying his disorderly and vicious passions, such as hatred, revenge, and the desire of invading another's property, under a false semblance of the public good; and if he employs false promises and professions of friendship, to amuse those whom he intends to oppress; this species of dissimulation is detestable, and becomes in that case what is called Imposture, which is, I think, widely different from real ability.

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I could wish, replied the Duke, that the Grand Master would tell us in what he makes real ability to consist.

It is my opinion, replied the Grand Master, that it consists in the good choice and conduct of our enterprises. We should only form just designs and proportion'd to our strength, and employ right means for their accomplishment. When a man employs indirect means to gain his point, it is because his mind is not sufficiently enlarg'd for the choice of those that are warrantable. Deceit is a mark of the contracted intellects of the person who uses it. We grant that it often gives him success, but always in a less solid manner than real ability. Those whom he has deceiv'd, cherish hatred and revenge in their hearts; and they fail not to make him feel their effects, if it is only in disparaging him in public. His notorious failure in point of principle will be detrimental to him in his future concerns. It is therefore a vulgar error to imagine, that a great Minister, or able Negotiator, should be an adept in the arts of falsehood. An able Minister dis-

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cerns the interest of the person with whom he treats; he points it out to him, and convinces him of it; and when he has made it clear to him, he finds means of making it accord with the interests he himself is charged with, and employs all his dexterity for their joint success. He acquires, by this means, the esteem and confidence of those with whom he is in treaty; and this esteem and confidence facilitate the means of succeeding in other affairs that are committed to his care. If you chuse that I should cite an instance of this, that of the Cardinal d'Osset is much to my purpose. He was a man of exemplary probity, always mild, and true to his word; a man of modesty, humility, and simplicity of manners; but he was a man of great sense, and true ability. He was of mean birth, without any advantage but that of his virtue and parts. He rais'd himself to the dignity of a Cardinal, by the greatest service that a man could render to religion and the state. The Ministers of the greatest address of that age, Princes and Ambassadors of the first rank, had in vain attempted to reconcile

reconcile Henry the Great to the Holy See. D'Ossat was at that time only Secretary to the French Embassy. The Ambassador himself died at Rome, and he undertook this great work and succeeded in it with the applause of both parties, pointing out to them their common interest. He afterwards kept up a good correspondence between the Holy See and the King his Master. He rendered other considerable services to the State, as well at Rome as with several other Princes and States of Italy. That integrity which drew the esteem and confidence of his Prince, and of those with whom he treated, was alway the principal basis of his address in negotiation. When I say that a Minister ought not to be given to tricking, I do not mean to strip him of those resources which he should find in his own parts and sagacity, I would have him, on the contrary, be fertile in expedients to dissipate those obstacles which lie in the way of his great enterprises. I would have him know how to insinuate himself into the minds of those whom he has need of, and to ac-

quire their good will; for it is one of the greatest proofs of a right mind and real abilities, to render ourselves agreeable to those with whom we have any commerce. It is sufficient for the purpose of not being deceitful, that a person does not tell an absolute falsehood; that he is exact in keeping his word; that he promises nothing in his Prince's or his own name that he has not will and ability to punctually perform. He is not, however, obliged to tell truths, that might prejudice the affairs entrusted to him by his Master. His fidelity, which is his first duty, engages him to exhibit their best side to enhance his power, and to gloss over or conceal the weakness of his State; and by success in his enterprises, he often repairs its weakness, and finds means to restore it entirely.

CHAP.

C H A P. XIV.

The difference between the management of the general and particular affairs of a State. That Fortune infatuates almost every man she raises. Reflections useful to persons that are in an elevated rank, to preserve them from this infatuation.

THERE is, replied the Grand Master, this distinction to be made between the conduct of the general affairs of a State, and those that are particular: The latter are subject to the laws and customs of the country we live in, to which it is necessary to conform, in order not to deviate from our duty and the rules of decorum. The former, which are the subject of treaties between Sovereigns, are not to be tied down to rules so rigid or invariable; and acknowledge no other in general but those of the public interest, which become a law to Princes, and those who are charg'd with their affairs; because the welfare and repose of the whole State depend upon them: Not but this interest is to be regulated by justice, as well with regard to subjects as foreign-

ers : But this has not always rules so fix'd as those of common justice ; for the great necessities of State, and the dangers it may be threaten'd with by the power and artifice of its enemies, sometimes dispense with our observance of it ; but it is requisite that these necessities be absolutely real, before the exceptions be admitted. It were to be wish'd, that a Prince or Minister would deviate as little, and as late as possible, from the practice of moral virtue ; and constantly endeavour to accommodate to it all the maxims of policy.

All these observations appear to me very just, replied the Marchioness ; and it were to be wish'd that all great Princes and Ministers would keep themselves in a capacity to profit by them.

There is no advice in general, replied the Grand Master, more lost or useless, than what is given to men whom Fortune has rais'd to employments of this sort. Most of them measure the opinion of their abilities by the degree of favor they are in. They are easily persuaded by it, that they have a genius superior to all those whom they see below them ; and
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when the extent of their parts really sets them above the common level of mankind, their success never fails to sink their powers. This is well express'd by one of the finest * geniuses of antiquity, who says, That Fortune puts a veil before the eyes of those whom she attends, and takes it off when she quits them.

This is in my opinion a pretty thought, replied the Marchioness; but I could wish to know the means of taking off this veil before Fortune retires; or rather, how to prevent her putting it before the eyes of her favorites.

A man prudent enough for that, replied the Grand Master, must consider, that the most distinguished parts of a man in publick life are very limited; and that he ought to attempt to enlarge them by the assistance of others, without presuming that he can find every resource within himself; and that the rank to which he is rais'd by the favor of his Prince, is not only envied by many, but that it may be worthily filled by others as well as himself, whatever abilities he may possess;

* Plato.

and that instead of exciting their spleen and resentment by harsh and haughty behaviour, he ought to endeavour to convince them by an upright, polite, and benevolent conduct, that he truly deserves his good fortune. He should likewise reflect, that he has no great cause of exultation in a distinction in which chance, and the temper, or casual humours of his Prince, had a greater share than his own merit; that this favor is precarious, dependant on the will of another, which is variable in a man of the greatest steadiness; and that should he even be assured that his great abilities will render him necessary to his Prince, and that the Prince has sagacity enough to be sensible of them, and so steady as not to alter his sentiments; if he derives a motive to pride from thence, this defect renders him less worthy, and unavoidab'y encreases the number of malecontents; which it is his interest to diminish to the utmost of his power.

It is my opinion, replied the Lady, that it is not possible for a Minister to avoid giving great discontent.

C H A P.

C H A P. XV.

Advice relative to the particular conduct of Ministers.

I Do not mean so much, replied the Grand Master, but speak only of lessening the number of the Dissatisfied. He will without doubt gain this point, if he has a firm resolution of doing all the good that depends upon himself, and avoiding every ill office to the utmost of his power; if he adds to the favors and services he does, that expression which contributes to heighten gratitude in the hearts of those who receive them; if he does not lose part of the merit of his beneficence, by obliging with an ill grace, and harsh and unpolish'd manners; if, when he is obliged to refuse favors that are requested of him, he does it politely, and with an expression of regret at the refusal. Helikewise ought not to be too difficult of access, by rude humours, pride, or that affected state which makes those who assume it odious. A publick Minister should regulate all his business in

such a manner, as to have fix'd hours for the reception of those who come to beg justice or favors at his hands, in order to prevent their languishing in unprofitable indolence at his levee. He ought to give them audience calmly, without peevishness or impatience, and to answer them with gentleness and good breeding. He should never adopt that bad maxim of Courtiers, who believe that it is sufficient to carry a gracious external appearance; to be open, affable, and of easy access; and to give sanguine hopes to all comers, without any intention of performing those things of which they raise expectations. This is a sure method of sinking themselves, especially with men of understanding, who are not long dupes to the imposture. It is much honestier and more expedient to undeceive them immediately, and to deliver themselves from their importunate solicitations, than to keep them in error, and make them waste their time, which they are chagrined at losing, and which they might employ to better purpose elsewhere. This recalls to my mind what I have somewhere read
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of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, who being one day solicited by a Spaniard to grant him a favor, refused him on the spot; upon which the suppliant return'd him thanks for his kindness. I have not granted you the favor you ask'd of me, replied the Emperor; who imagined that he had misunderstood him. It is not on that account, answer'd the Spaniard, that I thank your Majesty, but for having refused me speedily, and spared me the expence and chagrin I must have suffered in a long and fruitless solicitation. This reply pleased the Emperor so much, that he told the Spaniard that he would grant him the favor, because he was convinced from the answer he made him that he deserved it. One of the most important concerns of a Minister, continued the Grand Master, and which is often the most neglected, is to make a good choice of those Subjects that are to act under his orders for the public service. If he employs them from the sole consideration of alliances, relation, or complaisance to his Friends who recommend them, without having a necessary

regard to their personal qualifications, and without examining himself, whether their abilities are equal to the difficulties of their employment, he has often the mortification to see those enterprizes and affairs he has entrusted to them ruined by their faults. How many great and well-conceived designs have failed, through the misconduct and incapacity of those to whom the execution of them has been committed? How many important negotiations have fallen to the ground, by means of employing in them persons who were indiscreet, interested, vain, profligate, without parts or application, and therefore incapable of conducting them with the address, secrecy, and good conduct so requisite in such employments? If a good artist should undertake a curious and difficult piece of work with clumsy tools, which were never designed for that use, it would not be at all surprising, how ingenious soever he might be, if he did not succeed. An able Minister then should recommend persons to his Sovereign with whose abilities he is acquainted, and on whom
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he could entirely rely for the execution of those great designs that are committed to himself. He ought, for that purpose, to seek out the most skilful persons in each department, and employ them respectively in the same manner as he would prefer the best painters and sculptors when he would have a masterly performance in those arts. This is a matter of trifling consequence, in comparison to the management of the affairs on which the prosperity or calamitous circumstances of a state depend. If I may be permitted the use of a low comparison, which is however very a propos, it would be much less absurd to give a blacksmith orders for making a pendulum, a watch, or any other curious matter at which he had never work'd, than to employ a man of mean abilities, and unacquainted with public affairs, in negotiating some important treaty with a foreign Prince or State. The Minister who is regardless of this in the choice which he makes, is deficient in point of conduct himself, and offends against duty, in exposing the affairs of his Master,

ter, and the security of the State. He acts likewise against his own private interest; since the ill success falls commonly on himself, and he is answerable for the incapacity or wrong measures of those he employs. A wise Minister should likewise endeavour to acquire a small number of select friends of eminent abilities in different professions, capable of giving him good advice on the most important occasions. He has the more need of them, because the weight and number of affairs, in which he is incessantly engaged, do not leave him time to draw from his own abilities all the resources he wants. There is no Minister, however bright his parts, who may not receive great helps for the State and himself, from the advice of this small number of friends, when he has been able to make a good choice. It is above all things necessary, that he should have some friends capable of thinking; I mean whose minds should have a sufficient compass, to furnish him with different views and expedients proper for the forming and succeeding in great designs.

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They should have the sincerity to apprise him of those faults which they remark in his conduct, in order to give him the means of correcting them, and zeal and address to enhance the services he renders his Prince and the State, and to prevent his good intentions from being seen in a wrong light by the public. The good or bad opinions of a Minister, taken up by the public, are of greater consequence to him than he imagines. They are caught from one to another, and are often capable of supporting or ruining him with the Prince he serves.

But, said the Lady, where is it that this wise Minister will find friends so able and sincere, so firm and zealous? will he find them amongst those ambitious and importunate Courtiers who for ever besiege him; who are accustomed from their earliest years to flattery, disguise, and falsehood; who look on the attention they pay him as a means of gratifying their own rapacious desires; and whose false and spurious friendships, last no longer than his favor and prosperity.

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They must seek them, replied the Grand Master, amongst men of probity and known ability. There is not a country that does not furnish a small number of this class; but he must not expect that they will come to offer themselves. The Minister must give them to understand, that he wishes for their friendship for the purpose of using it for the public service, as well as his own private advantage: His pride has nothing to suffer in this case, since there is no competition between him and this small select number, whose advantageous characters render them worthy of his confidence and esteem. It is his concern to draw them to him, and to facilitate their access, if he would avail himself of the assistance which he may draw from their parts and good principles. If he will not be deceived in the choice of these able and steady friends, he should be guided by the public voice, which scarce ever errs in its judgement on this subject. If on the contrary he gives himself up to those persons who throw themselves in his way, without having any knowledge of them,

as is commonly the case, through custom or indolence, to avoid the trouble of a discreet choice, he sooner or later bears the ill consequence of his misconduct.

This piece of advice appears to me so prudent and useful, replied the Grand Master, that if ever I should have a relation or friend in the ministry, I would make him a present of it in writing, and prevail on him to read it over repeatedly, how much soever he might be engaged, that he might not be blinded by the presumption, pride, and conceit so common to men raised to great employments; and that he might take the veil from his eyes, of which that author of antiquity spoke, which prevents his seeing things as they are.

But I could wish, added the Marchioness, that the Grand Master would inform us, whether the great qualities, and all the precautions which he has so detailed, would suffice to acquire the esteem of mankind? and, whether the propensity they have to envy, does not often produce in their hearts an effect
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the very reverse of what such qualities ought to excite?

CHAP. XVI.

That the virtues and good qualities are not always capable of making those who possess them beloved and esteemed. The means of acquiring the esteem of mankind.

THIS remark, Madam, replied the Grand Master, is worthy of your discernment; and we see, but too often, that shining merit produces the ill effects that you have observed. It resembles the rays of the sun, which weak eyes cannot bear. We should accustom those with whom we are conversant to this, by interesting them to do justice to the good qualities of others, because the constant attention that they have to themselves causes all their actions and opinions to have respect to their own interest. It follows from hence, that parties and societies contribute much to extend the reputation of those who have the address to form them; because all those who
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become members believe themselves interested in speaking well of them. But there are few who have candor enough to commend those persons who are not studious of pleasing them; and they think it a great matter, if they do not traduce them.

Yet, replied the Lady, esteem may subsist with hatred in an equitable mind; and we feel every day that we preserve our esteem for our enemies, when they deserve it.

That is true, replied the Grand Master, but this is only an internal esteem, that never appears; whereas, that which is accompanied with the attachment of interest, friendship, or gratitude, loves to shew itself. I have remarked, continued the Grand Master, that those whom Fortune has raised above the level of mankind, have two sorts of reputation directly opposite; and that there are few of this rank of whom the world does not speak very well, and very ill. I have examined the reason, and am convinced that it proceeds from their having many virtues and many faults. Those
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who are interested in speaking well of them, consider only their good qualities; others, who are averse to them, or in opposite interests, remark their foibles alone, to hold them up to observation. It is found in fact that both the one and the other speak truth, though the conclusions they draw are so different.

I beg the Grand Master, replied the Duke, to inform us, what are the best means which a man of merit can use to engage the public to do him justice.

It is my opinion, replied the Grand Master, that it would be necessary, in order to attain to this point, that he endeavour to acquire the esteem and friendship of those persons whose reputation is well established in the country where he resides. Every court, republic, city, or community, has a set of men distinguished by their abilities, virtues, and good actions, whose suffrage commands the public opinion. He should engage them by his assiduities, his good behaviour, and even his respect, to make his worth known; and to prepossess those persons

persons in his favor to whom he is yet a stranger. These are happy prejudices that are apt, in a short time, to spread the reputation of a man of merit. They spare him the trouble of displaying it, in the eyes of those who are thus engaged in his favor by his friends. It is much easier for him to confirm these sentiments, than to give them birth. Add to this, that his modesty should always leave to others the care of enhancing his merit. It is not enough that he renders himself amiable by his agreeable qualities, and the complacency of his mind; he must take pleasure in commending what he finds praise-worthy in another, if he would have others do him the same justice. He must be easy and indulgent in excusing the faults of those with whom he has an intercourse, in bearing with their caprices, eccentric humours, and injuries. If he undertakes to correct them, it must be with much respect and management; for men are naturally averse to those who oppose their passions, or censure their faults. It is much the safest and best way to bear what we cannot

not prevent, as one bears the noise of any beast that is offensive, than to make fruitless attempts to alter it. Patience in this instance becomes not only useful, but more convenient, than the unavailing trouble which many take upon them of reforming the world; who preach without a mission; and who are always disposed to say disagreeable truths to the faces of those, with whom they are to live. They pretend commonly that this dogmatical humour proceeds from charity for their neighbour; but if we could examine the bottom of their hearts, we should perceive it founded in pride, which gave them a spirit of usurpation. If they were inspired by true charity, they would be more disposed, than they commonly are, to excuse the foibles of others. They would purge their remonstrances and advice of all acrimony; and they would set examples of patience, by that forbearance which is so necessary to maintain the peace and order of society. These reformers ought likewise to consider, that the too great pains they take, in correcting the faults of others,

others, must often take off their attention from their own; that they are commonly self-interested, harsh, opinionated, and often revengeful. It is remarkable, that there are no men who more impatiently bear the discovery of their foibles, or any representation on that head, than those persons who suppose that a sort of austere life gives them a right to undertake a reformation. We are apt to detest persons of a satyrical and abusive turn. People may sometimes be entertained with them, because they flatter that envy and ill-nature which so generally prevail. They, however, leave a malignant influence against themselves on the minds of those whom they have entertained, caused by their reflecting, that they have no better measure at the hands of these slanderers when they have an opportunity of entertaining others at their expence.

Fear, replied the Lady, sometimes operates in their favour like friendship.

If they entertain this opinion, replied the Grand Master, they are often in an error; and it would be a difficult matter
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for them to extend this slavery far. It more frequently happens, that the Public are united against these slanderous and malignant spirits, and make them feel the effects of their resentment, by attributing to them sometimes vices and foibles that do not belong to them. Men, who are of opinion that there is no way of establishing a solid power in this world but that of making one's self fear'd, are liable to great mistakes in that point. They ground their opinion on the following circumstance, viz. that the depravity of mankind is at such a pitch that they can be kept within bounds only by fear of punishment; because, through their inordinate self-love, their own actions have no other principle than that of self-interest. Though this maxim be true in general, it is not so in the application which they make of it; because men who think justly, place their true interest, and most solid happiness, in acquiring a concurrence of the good will and affections of the greatest part of mankind.

C H A P. XVII.

*That the esteem and friendship of mankind
deserve not to be too anxiously sought for.*

AS we are know we are here but for a short time, we ought to employ it in pursuit of a happiness more certain and lasting than the esteem and friendship of man, and the feeble advantages we can draw from thence. They do not deserve all the care, pains, and anxiety we are at to obtain them. We ought not to wish for them, but as they are compatible with the means of securing that happiness, unbounded and endless, which ought to be the true object of all our actions, hopes, and desires.

Father Bourdaloue himself could not have concluded better, replied the Marchioness; but I have not yet done with the Grand Master. I beg the favour of him to give me, in a summary way, the portrait of a man of merit according to his idea of that character, and after the model of all the judicious observations

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he has lately made. By this means the idea may be more strongly impressed on my mind, and I may be the better enabled to draw advantage from it, by contemplating this model incessantly for the purpose of imitating it in some respects, if I cannot attain to the imitation of it in all.

If you required of me, replied the Grand Master, the portrait of a Lady of distinguished wit, good sense, and fine accomplishments, it would have been a much easier matter to have obeyed your commands; for I should have only had to copy after nature. But as I pique myself on an implicit obedience to them, I shall endeavour to give you satisfaction with regard to your request.

C H A P. XVIII.

*The portrait of a man of merit *.*

A MAN of merit, continued the Grand Master, is the master-piece of nature and art; for both must concur in forming him. He must have a great soul, and benevolent disposition. The excellence of his mind must consist in a steady love of truth and justice, and a constant desire of doing all the good in his power. His understanding should be naturally penetrating, comprehensive, and clear. He must have an habitual turn for reflection on himself, and upon the affairs that occur to him, before he forms his judgment upon either. His genius must be cultivated and refined by the attainment of the Belles Lettres, and other sciences which may contribute to the im-

* In this portrait of a man of merit, there is a short but comprehensive summary of the rules of life laid down by our author, for the assistance of the memory. The spirit of the book is thrown into this model of excellence. It is justly observed, that though we cannot reach perfection, yet the object of our imitation should be as perfect as possible. With this notion we read the scriptures themselves, in order to follow, though at ever so great a distance, or with ever so unequal a pace,

provement of his natural parts. Those especially must be acquired, which put him in a capacity of being useful to himself and others. He must give them the preference to those sciences which have no other end, than a vain and useless curiosity. These he must regard as transient amusements, nor excel in them at the expence of time. There must be added to those sciences that are necessary and useful in his rank of life, or the profession he has made choice of, an exact knowledge of the rules of good breeding practised among the people of fashion in the country where he resides. He must be regular in the observance of them, and render himself so agreeable in the company of those with whom he is conversant, as to be always wished for and received with pleasure. His temper should be even, and free from a restless caprice; he should be at peace with himself, in order to be at peace with others. He must get rid of all vulgar errors, as well those which seduce the mind, as those which corrupt the heart. He ought not to be conceited of his quality, influence,

fluence, or fortune; his learning, abilities, or personal advantages; his courage, address, or any other qualifications natural or acquired. He should know how to possess them without too high a self-estimation, or too exalted an idea of their perfection. Their precarious nature, and short duration, should be the subject of his serious reflections. It is requisite that he be not only a lover of truth, but that he make it his constant aim and pursuit, that he abhor all falsehood and prejudice, vain honours, and vain applause. He should be continually employed in his duty to God and man, and possessed with a constant desire of satisfying both. He ought to be firm and patient in adversity, humble and modest in prosperity, religious and charitable in either estate. He must judge favourably of the actions and intentions of his neighbour, and be ready to excuse his faults, indulgent in bearing them, easy in pardoning the injuries he has received from him, and compassionate to his misfortunes and foibles. He should feel a pleasure in relieving him in either

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ease, in assisting him in necessity, in curing him of his errors, in contributing to his happiness, and in doing in his behalf what he would wish to have done for himself. He ought to be respectful to his superiors; complaisant, easy, and agreeable in his intercourse with equals; kind to his inferiors, humane and accessible; civil and genteel to all the world; a good citizen, a good parent, a good friend, a good subject, and above all, a good Christian.

C H A P. XIX.

That the love of God is the source of all virtues. Of the effects which it produces. The degree of this love is the measure of all the excellence of mankind.

WITHOUT the last quality, continued the Grand Master, all we call virtue, is but weakness, vain-glory, and self interest, disguised. The virtues ought to be produced by the love we owe to God, which should be their only source; and to this they should return as to their center. When a soul is thoroughly pene-

penetrated with this love, it raises it above human weakness, elevates all its thoughts and desires, and enables it to practise, without labour or artifice, the most difficult and heroic virtues. Of this we shall be easily convinced, if we consider the lives of the primitive Christians who were animated by this love. We shall find that they eclipsed in firmness, exalted courage, and all other virtues, the most celebrated Heroes of antiquity. Not only men, but simple women, surmounting the weakness and timidity of the sex, have with joy suffered reproach, captivity, death, and the most horrible tortures. These Christians, not content with pardoning their enemies, have, in the midst of these torments, prayed to God for their persecutors. We may observe with what charity, what justice and disinterestedness, and in what harmony they lived. They did not reserve any thing as property, laying all at the feet of their pastors to be equally distributed amongst the other Christians, whom they regarded as brethren. They succoured them in their distress, bore a share in their

their misfortunes, were meek in heart and spirit, modest, pious, charitable, sober, chaste, obedient to superiors, and faithful to God and man. We find that they did not revolt against those Emperors from whom they suffered the most cruel persecutions. They did not disclaim all allegiance to them, under pretence of their being idolaters or hereticks. They served faithfully in their armies when engaged in them, and prayed to God to preserve and convert them. They surpassed all the other soldiers in courage when brought to the test, in the execution of their duty in their profession and employments.

● We find likewise, said the Duke, amongst the Greeks and Romans, who were not enlightened by the gospel, shining examples of moral virtue. They were most studiously observant of the laws of hospitality; and signalized, by a number of great and heroic actions, the love they bore their country.

That is true, replied the Grand Master; but that love of their country, and that hospitality which they regarded as
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the pinnacle of perfection, were only the feeble and shadowy outlines of Christian Charity, which by our union with God unites all mankind, by the same bonds, in mutual love. It does not limit its effects to the accommodation of strangers on their travels, or to the services of those who live in the same country and under the same laws. The true Christian Charity extends itself to all mankind, without distinction of country, languages, laws, manners, or religion. It teaches us to look upon Christians as our chief brethren; but it does not exclude from our fraternal regard others who live in error and ignorance. It labors not only to assist them in their distress, but even to instruct and enlighten them; to turn them from their wanderings and delusion, and lead them into the way of truth. For this purpose it uses no other means than gentleness and persuasion, kind offices and beneficence, entreaties and good example *. The love of God produces

* A very extraordinary sentiment indeed, for a person bred in the principles of an intolerant superstition, and a hierarchy

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every virtue in the hearts of those who are thoroughly possess'd with it; and carries them into practice with zeal, pleasure, and perseverance. It refines and strengthens the will, and enlightens our minds with the most lively rays of faith, giving us a clue to truths the most abstruse, sacred, and important. It is the degree of this love of God, and this fervent charity, which is the measure and perfection of the worth of man.

It would not be fair, said the Marchioness rising, to intrude longer upon the goodness of the Grand Master. I have an interest in managing it, that he may never be discouraged from communicating his knowledge to me, of the advantage of which I am very sensible. I shall never be able to make him sufficient acknowledgements for those important truths which he has just observ'd to us.

As they were ready to part, the Grand Master made this answer to the Marchioness, and the rest of the company.

that affects infallibility; a convincing proof of a truly benevolent mind, incapable of being warped by the strongest of all prejudices.

Since

KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD. 179

Since the subjects which we have just examined gave you satisfaction, I will entertain you again at our first interview, if agreeable, with the good taste of our age in works of Wit; and I will at present repeat to you some encomiums on our best Poets, and some celebrated ladies of the same age and nation, whose works will furnish you with the means of forming a judgement of them.

The whole party immediately join'd in this request to the Grand Master, and as he had these poems about him, he read them to the company.

F I N I S.

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examined gave you satisfaction, I will
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F I N I S

